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1855  
HISTORIC CHINA

AND

OTHER SKETCHES.



# HISTORIC CHINA

AND

## OTHER SKETCHES

BY

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LONDON:  
THOS. DE LA RUE & CO.  
110, BUNHILL ROW.

1882

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## ERRATA.

P. 118, last line, *for* 'was legalised' *read* 'was virtually legalised.'

P. 108, third line, *for* 'Gould' *read* 'Gold.'

P. 164, eighth line, *for* 'woulds' *read* 'wounds.'



## PREFACE

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THE six 'Dynastic Sketches' with which this volume begins, are intended to present to the general reader a rough panorama of the history of China for the past three thousand years. The whole six will be found to occupy not more than about sixty pages, or two pages to a century, condensation and omission having been pushed to an extreme limit in deference to the homœopathic nature of the demand for such information. For the British public takes but a scanty interest in Chinese affairs, past or present, in spite of the enormous lapse of time during which the Chinese people have covered a vast proportion of the earth's surface and have constituted an overwhelming percentage of the human race.

Between these six 'Dynastic Sketches' I have sandwiched some translated extracts as specimens of the lighter literature of China.

Then follow a series of 'Judicial Sketches,' comprising a brief survey of the *Penal Code* of the present dynasty, and translations of twelve criminal cases actually tried by a famous magistrate who flourished about one hundred and fifty years ago, since which date the procedure of Chinese courts has undergone no change.

The volume concludes with several miscellaneous articles on various topics, as set forth in the Table of Contents.

A carefully-prepared *Index* has been added, on the chance of the work finding even a back place as a casual book of reference on the subjects with which it professes to deal.

HERBERT A. GILES.

# DYNASTIC SKETCHES.

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## I.—THE CHOWS.

B.C. 1122-250.

THE Chinese people cannot be proved to have originally come from anywhere beyond the limits of the Chinese empire. At the remotest period to which we can satisfactorily go back, without quitting the domain of history for that of legend, we find them already in existence as an organised and as a more or less civilised nation. Previous to that time, their condition had doubtless been that of nomad tribes; but whether as immigrants, or as veritable sons of the soil, there is not sufficient evidence to show. Conjecture, however, based for the most part upon coincidences of speech, writing, or manners and customs, has been busy with their ultimate origin; and they have been variously identified with the Turks, with the Chaldees, with the earliest inhabitants of Ireland, and with the lost tribes of Israel.

According to one native authority, China (*i.e.*, the world) was evolved out of chaos exactly 3,276,481 years ago. This evolution was brought about by the action of a First Cause, or Force, which separated into two

principles, active and passive, male and female. These last found their material embodiment in Heaven and Earth, and became the father and mother of all things, beginning with Man, who was immediately associated with them in a triumvirate of creative powers. Then ensued ten immense periods, the last of which has been made, by some Chinese writers on chronology, to end where every sober history of China should begin, namely, with the establishment of the Chow dynasty eleven hundred years before the birth of Christ. During this almost immeasurable lapse of time, a process of development was going on, involving such discoveries as the production of fire, the construction of houses, boats, and wheeled vehicles, the cultivation of grain, and mutual communication by means of writing. The father of Chinese history chose, indeed, to carry us back to the court of the Yellow Emperor (B.C. 2697), and to introduce us to his successors—Yao and Shun—and to the Great Yü, who, by his engineering skill, had drained away a terrible inundation, which some have foolishly sought to identify with Noah's flood. But that was China's 'golden age,' the true record of which is shrouded for us in the obscurity of centuries. There were a few laws, but never any occasion to exact the penalties attached to misconduct. It was considered superfluous to close the house-door at night, and no one would even pick up any lost property that lay in the high road. All was virtue, happiness, and prosperity, the like of which has not since been known. The Emperor Shun was raised from the plough-tail to the

throne, solely because of his filial piety, in recognition of which wild beasts used to come and voluntarily drag his plough for him through 'the channelled fields,' while birds of the air would hover round and guard his sprouting grain from the depredations of insects. This of course is not history; and but little more can be said for the accounts given of the two dynasties which ruled China between the above-mentioned golden age and the opening reigns of the House of Chow. The historian in question had not many sources of information at command. Besides tradition, of which he largely availed himself, the chief of these was the hundred chapters which had been edited by Confucius from the historical remains of those times, now known as the *Book of History*. This contains an unquestionable foundation of fact, pointing to a comparatively advanced state of civilisation even so far back as 2,000 years before our era; but the picture is dimly seen, and many of its details are of little practical value. It is only with the dynasty of the Chows that we begin to feel ourselves on safe ground, though long before that date the Chinese were undoubtedly enjoying a far higher civilisation than fell to the share of most Western nations until many centuries later. The art of writing had already been fully developed, having passed, if we are to believe native researches, from an original system of knotted cords,\* through successive stages of notches on wood

cf. Vellinga

\* Some method of calculation by means of knotted cords exists among the Sonthals of Bengal, and is mentioned in the "Report on the Census for 1872."

and rude outlines of natural objects, down to the phonetic stage in which it exists at the present day. Astronomical observations of a simple kind had been made and recorded, and the year divided into months. The rite of marriage had been substituted for capture; and although cowries were still employed and remained in use until a much later date, metallic coins of various shapes and sizes began to be recognised as a more practicable medium of exchange. Music, both vocal and instrumental, was widely cultivated; and a kind of solemn posturing filled the place that has been occupied by dancing among nations farther to the west. Painting, charioteering, and archery, were reckoned among the fine arts; the cross-bow especially being a favourite weapon either on the battle-field or in the chase. The people seem to have lived upon rice and cabbage, pork and fish, much as they do now; they also drank the ardent spirit distilled from rice, vulgarly known as 'samshoo,' and clad themselves in silk or their own coarse homestuffs, according to the means of each. All this previous to the dynasty of Chow, with which it is now proposed to begin.

The Chows rose to power over the vices of preceding rulers, aided by the genius of a certain duke or chieftain of the Chow State, though he personally never reached the Imperial throne. It was his more famous son, who, in B.C. 1122, routed the forces of the last tyrant of the semi-legendary period, and made himself master of China. The China of those days consisted of a number of petty principalities, clustering round one central State,

and thus constituting a federation. The central State managed the common affairs, while each one had its own local laws and administration. It was, in some senses, a feudal age, since the various 'dukes' were regarded as vassals, owing allegiance to the sovereign at the head of the Imperial State, and bound to assist him with money and men in case of need. And in order to keep together this mass, constantly in danger of disintegration from strifes within, the sovereigns of the house of Chow were forever summoning these vassal dukes to the capital and making them renew, with ceremonies of sacrifice and potations of blood, their vows of loyalty to themselves and treaties of alliance with each other. The senior duke always occupied a position somewhat closer to the sovereign than the others. It was his special business to protect the Imperial territory from invasion by any malcontent vassal; and he was often deputed to punish acts of insubordination and contumacy, relying for help on the sworn faith of all the States as a body against any individual recalcitrant State. Such was the political condition of things through a long series of reigns for nearly nine centuries, the later history of this long and famous dynasty being simply the record of a struggle against the increasing power and ambitious designs of the vassal State of Ch'in, until at length the power of the latter not only outgrew that of the sovereign State, but successfully defied the united efforts of all the others combined together in a league. The house of Chow was overthrown, and the house of Ch'in reigned in its stead, but over an empire,

the altered aspect of which will be described in its proper place. Meanwhile, we may glance backward over these nine hundred years, and gather some few interesting facts as to the general economy of the China of those days.

The religion of the Chinese was at this date a modification of the older and simpler form of nature-worship practised by their ruder forefathers. The principal objects of veneration were still Heaven and Earth, and the more prominent among the destructive and beneficent powers of nature; but a tide of personification and deification had begun to set in, and to the spirits of natural objects and influences, now rapidly assuming material shapes, had been added the spirits of departed heroes, whose protection was invoked after death by those to whom it had been afforded during life. The sovereigns of the Chow dynasty worshipped in a building which they called the Hall of Light, and which also served the purpose of an audience and council chamber. It was 112 feet square, and surmounted by a dome; typical of heaven above and earth beneath. Thirty-six doors gave ample means of ingress and egress, while seventy-two windows, each three feet in height, admitted the light of day. China has always been remarkably backward in architectural development, never having got beyond the familiar roof with its turned-up corners, in which antiquaries trace a likeness to the tent of their nomad days. Hence it is that the Hall of Light of the Chows is considered by the Chinese to have been a very wonderful structure.



Some have said that the Pentateuch was carried to China in the sixth century B.C. ; but no definite traces of Judaism are discoverable until several centuries later, under the dynasty of the Hans.

The Chow period was pre-eminently one of ceremonial observances, pushed to an extreme limit. Even Confucius was unable to rise above the dead level of an ultra-formal etiquette, which occupies in his teachings a place altogether out of proportion to any advantages likely to accrue from the most scrupulous compliance with its rules. Happily, 'ceremonies' were not for the poor and illiterate. They were confined chiefly to the proceedings of vassal courts and courtiers *vis-à-vis* the Imperial court and each other ; to the daily life of personages of leisure and social standing. The quiet dignity of the modern mandarin, surrounded as it is by a host of harmless formalities which seem to us out of keeping with the nineteenth century, is in part a legacy from the exaggerated ceremonial of the Chows.

During the early centuries of our present period, laws were, as might be expected, excessively severe, and punishments correspondingly barbarous ; mutilation, and death by burning or dissection, being among the enumerated penalties. On the other hand, aged persons of ninety and upwards, as well as children under seven years of age, were exempted from all punishment—as, indeed, they are now, except in cases of rebellion and high treason.

One hundred years before the close of the Chow dynasty, a great statesman, named Wei Yang, appeared

in the rising State of Ch'in, above-mentioned, and brought about many valuable reformations. Among other things, he introduced the system of tithings, which has endured to the present day. The unit of Chinese social life has always been the family and not the individual; and Wei Yang caused the people to be divided into groups of ten families to each, upon a basis of mutual protection and responsibility. The headman or elder of each group, elected among themselves as representative of the tithing, formed one of an unofficial council by whom the affairs of the community were regulated, rights secured, and wrongs redressed, as far as possible without appeal to the authorities.

The soil of China has always been regarded as the inalienable property of her Imperial ruler for the time being, held in trust by him on behalf of a higher and greater Power, whose vice-regent he is, and who marks its sense of his good or evil administration by such outward and visible signs of pleasure and displeasure as a plenteous harvest or a destroying flood. In the age of the Chows, land appears to have been cultivated upon a system of communal tenure, one-ninth of the total produce being devoted in all cases to the expenses of government and the maintenance of the ruling family in each State. Copper coin, of a uniform shape and portable size, was first cast, according to Chinese writers, about half-way through the sixth century B.C. We learn from several sources that an irregular form of 'money' had been in circulation long before, one of the early

vassal dukes having been advised, in order to replenish his treasury, to "break up the hills, and make money out of the metal therein; to evaporate sea-water, and make salt. This," added his advising minister, "will benefit the realm, and with the profits you may buy up all kinds of goods cheap, and store them until the market has risen. Establish also three hundred *dépôts* of courtezans for the traders, who will thereby be induced to bring all kinds of merchandise to your country. This merchandise you will tax, and thus have a sufficiency of funds to meet the expenses of your army." Such were some of the principles of finance and political economy among the Chows, customs' duties being apparently, even at that early date, a recognised part of the revenue.

The art of healing was practised among the Chinese in their pre-historic times, but the first quasi-scientific efforts, of which we have any written record, belong to the period with which we are now dealing. The physicians of the Chow dynasty classified diseases under the four seasons of the year:—Headaches and neuralgic affections under *spring*, skin diseases of all kinds under *summer*, fevers and agues under *autumn*, and bronchial and pulmonary complaints under *winter*. They treated the various diseases that fell under these headings by suitable exhibitions of one or more ingredients taken from the five classes of drugs, derived from herbs, trees, living creatures, minerals, and grains, each of which class contained medicines of five flavours, with special properties, as follows:—Sour, for nourishing the bones; acrid, for nourishing the muscles; salt, for nourishing

the blood-vessels ; bitter, for nourishing general vitality ; and sweet, for nourishing the flesh. It was a standing regulation that all potions administered to the ruler of a State should first be tasted by his Prime Minister ; and the public at large was warned against rashly swallowing the prescriptions of any physician whose family had not been three generations in the medical profession.

When the Chows went into battle they formed a line, with the bowmen on the left and the spearmen on the right flank. The centre was occupied by chariots, each drawn by either three or four horses harnessed abreast. Swords, daggers, shields, iron-headed clubs some five to six feet in length and weighing from twelve to fifteen pounds, huge iron hooks, drums, cymbals, gongs, horns, banners and streamers innumerable, were also among the equipment of war. Beacon-fires of wolves' dung were lighted to announce the approach of an enemy and summon the inhabitants to arms. Quarter was rarely if ever given, and it was customary to cut the ears from the bodies of the slain. Parleys were conducted and terms of peace arranged under the shelter of a banner of truce, upon which two characters were inscribed—'Stop fighting.'

It was under the Chows, a thousand years before Christ, that the people of China began to possess family names. Previous to that time there appear to have been tribal or clan names, but these were not in ordinary use among the individual members of each clan, who were known by their personal appellations only, bestowed on them in childhood by their parents. Gradually, it

became customary to tack on to this personal appellation a surname, adopted generally from the name of the place where the family lived, sometimes from the personal appellation or official title of a famous ancestor. By the time of Confucius, the use of surnames had become definitely established for all classes.

The Chows founded a university, the shadow of which ✓ remains at the present day. They seem to have had theatrical representations of some kind, though it is difficult to say of what nature these actually were. Music must have already reached a stage of considerable development, if we are to believe Confucius himself, who has left it on record that after listening to a certain melody he was so affected as not to be able to taste meat for three months. With him, indeed, music was a political instrument, its influence tending to smooth away ruggedness of disposition and make men more amenable to law and order. Slavery was at this date a regular domestic institution, and was not confined as now to the purchase of women alone; and whereas in still earlier ages it had been usual to bury wooden puppets in the tombs of princes, we now read of slave-boys and slave-girls barbarously interred alive with the body of every ruler of a State, in order, as was believed, to wait upon the tyrant's spirit after death. But public opinion ✓ began during the Confucian era to discountenance this savage rite; and the son of a man who left instructions that he should be buried in a large coffin between two of his concubines, ventured to disobey his father's commands. We know that the Chows sat on chairs (while

all other eastern nations were sitting on the ground), and ate their food and drank their wine from tables; that they slept on beds and rode on horseback. They measured the hours with the aid of sun-dials; and the invention of the compass is attributed, but on wholly insufficient grounds, to one of their earliest heroes. They played games of calculation of an abstruse character, and devised what is to all intents and purposes a variety of chess. They also had games involving manual dexterity, such as pitching arrows into a long-necked bottle. They appear to have worn shoes of leather, and stockings, and hats and caps, in addition to robes of silk; and to have possessed such other material luxuries as fans, mirrors of metal, flat-irons, and bath-tubs. But it is often difficult to separate truth from falsehood in the statements of Chinese writers with regard to their early history. They are fond of exaggerating the civilisation of their forefathers, which, as a matter of fact, was sufficiently advanced to command admiration without the undesirable colouring of fiction they have thus been tempted to lay on.

It has been stated that the art of writing was known to the Chinese long before our starting-point at the end of the twelfth century B.C. Indeed, there is a tablet still in existence, covered with an illegible inscription written in the wriggling style known as the 'tadpole character,' which is said to have been set up on a mountain in commemoration of the labours of the Great Yü, more than 4,000 years ago. It was discovered only in the thirteenth century of our era, and is admittedly a

forgery of that date. Dismissing, therefore, this and other similar attempts, the great antiquity of Chinese writing remains beyond a doubt; and, far back as we can go, there is a great gulf between us and the beginnings of the art. It would seem that the rude delineation of a few dozen of the more prominent objects in nature, such as the sun, moon, stars, etc., was followed, contrary to all analogy, by a sudden inspiration—the use of signs to represent spoken sounds; and that then, by a process of combination, a host of composite characters was produced, each one made up of two parts, guiding the eye to the sound and sense, respectively. It is, at any rate, pretty certain that eight centuries before Christ elaborate symbols of the kind, approximately those of modern times, were traced upon tablets of bamboo with a sharp-pointed metal stylus; and there are now in Peking ten irregular-shaped blocks of stone, called ‘stone drums,’ bearing inscriptions in the same form of character as that employed under the Chow dynasty, to which period they may without exaggeration be referred. We have also plenty of inscriptions said to be copied from vases or bells dating from the pre-historic dynasties; but many of these are evidently spurious and the rest doubtful. Of the bamboo tablets in use among the Chows, not one is known to be in existence now; and on paper, which was not invented until several centuries later, there are probably no manuscript remains more than six or seven hundred years old.

Near about the middle of the Chow dynasty was born

Lao-tzŭ, the founder of an abstruse system of ethical philosophy which was destined first of all to lose its original character in wild speculation and alchemistic research; then to be supplemented by an admixture of Buddhist ritual and creed; and finally to drag out, side by side and on friendly terms with its Indian rival, that loathsome combination of knavery and superstition so familiar in the *Taoism* of to-day. But the 'Tao' of Lao-tzŭ, as we learn from the only brief treatise bequeathed by him to posterity, was simply the "path" of rectitude; and the utterances by which he sought to guide mankind along it to a haven of perfect virtue contain nothing of the mysticism imported into the system by his later disciples, still less of the absurdities by which, as will be seen hereafter, his pure philosophy became ultimately corrupted and transformed. "Three precious things I prize and hold fast," said Lao-tzŭ—"Humility, Compassion, and Economy."

Closely following, and partially a contemporary, came Confucius, a teacher who has been equalled in his influence upon masses of the human race by Buddha alone, and approached only by Mahomet and Christ. His noble doctrines, among which is to be found the 'golden rule,' with many other maxims of great ethical value, were collected together about a hundred years after his death, and now form one of the standard classical works in which all candidates for literary honours are rigorously examined. Confucius devoted his life chiefly to the moral amelioration of his fellow-men by oral teaching. But he was also an author



Besides editing, as stated in a previous paragraph, one hundred chapters of the historical remains of earlier ages, he published a collection of the old national ballads of China, and wrote a history of his native State during the two hundred and fifty years immediately preceding his own death in B.C. 479. All these we have now, the latter accompanied by a diffuse commentary, the work of an admiring disciple, and practically the most valuable portion of the whole.

In his daily life, the Sage was severely formal and regular. He never spoke at meals. He did not eat to excess; and in his potations he was careful to keep on the right side of inebriety. He was particular about the colour and make of his clothes; and insisted that all his domestic surroundings should be 'squarely' arranged. With him, decorum was a virtue; but it was the decorum of external ceremonies only, and its essence consisted in a due performance of bows and scrapes.

A hundred years later came Mencius, the record of whose teachings also forms an important part of the only authorised curriculum of a modern student. His pet theory, and one which has been more intimately associated with his name than any other, was that 'the nature of man is good,' and that all evil tendencies are necessarily acquired from evil communications subsequent to birth and early childhood. He was opposed in this view by more than one able thinker of the age. Some upheld an exactly opposite opinion; others, a mean between these two extremes—namely, that the nature of man at birth was not prejudiced either way, but

remained open to receive any impressions that particular circumstances might produce. Another of the Mencian dogmas was that the people can be led in any given direction, but cannot be made to understand the reason why. Meanwhile, the country was flooded with philosophical treatises of various kinds and values, some of which have come down to us, while the great bulk of them has disappeared.

It was then that Lao-tzŭ's speculations fell into the hands of enthusiastic seekers after truth, and so much more began to be read out of them than the old philosopher himself had written in them. Foremost among these was Chuang-tzŭ, who broached several extraordinary theories of a socialistic and communistic character. He argued that if all laws were abrogated, crime must necessarily cease; and showed that if weights and measures were abolished, the people could not cheat each other in the exchange of commodities. But Chuang-tzŭ, like all those who have impugned in the slightest degree the holy doctrines of Confucianism, has been relegated to the limbo of heterodoxy. His work remains, but it is not read except as a curiosity of literature.

With the briefest possible allusion to three important books, not otherwise mentioned, and a short paragraph on the beginnings of modern Chinese poetry, this scanty notice of the literary activity of the Chows will be brought to an end.

The *Book of Changes* is the most ancient work in the Chinese language. Its subject is a philosophic

system deducible from the combinations and permutations of certain sets of lines of different lengths, formed into "diagrams" representing some power in nature, either active or passive, such as fire, water, thunder, etc. Attributed to one of the legendary emperors, nearly 3,000 years before Christ, we may safely refer it to the commencement of the Chow dynasty, as the period to which in all probability it belongs.

The *Chow Ritual* dates from a century or two later. It treats of officials and their various functions, and is a guide to the court etiquette of those days, the etiquette of private life being dealt with in another work, the *Decorum Ritual*, which has also come down to us from the Chows.

The *Erh Ya* is a glossary of terms used in the old historical and poetical remains, classified according to subjects, and accompanied by explanatory notes. It has been assigned to the opening years of the Chow dynasty, but belongs more probably to the Confucian era, some five or six centuries later.

Excluding from our calculations the more or less irregular national ballads which were collected and edited by Confucius, we may consider Chinese poetry to have begun, a hundred years before the Chows passed away, with the productions of Ch'ü P'ing, a high officer of government in one of the vassal States. A beautiful poem from his hand may still be read. It is entitled *Dissipation of Grief*, and consists of a pathetic adieu to the world and its troubles, which he abruptly quitted by

drowning himself. Chagrin at the loss of his sovereign's favour, intrigued away from him by an unworthy rival, urged him to the fatal step. His loss was deeply felt by the people at large, and an annual sacrifice was instituted in his memory, involving a pretended search for his body, which survives in the famous Dragon Festival of to-day.

xx The nine centuries covered by the history of the Chows were full of stirring incidents in other parts of the world. The Trojan war had just been brought to an end, and Æneas had taken refuge in Italy from the sack of Troy. Early in the dynasty, Zoroaster was founding in Persia the religion of the Magi, the worship of fire, which survives in the Parseeism of Bombay. Saul was made king of Israel, and Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem. Later on, Lycurgus gave laws to the Spartans, and Romulus laid the first stone of the eternal city. Then came the Babylonish captivity, the appearance of Buddha, the conquest of Asia Minor by Cyrus, the rise of the Roman republic, the defeats of Darius at Marathon and of Xerxes at Salamis, the Peloponnesian war, the retreat of the Ten Thousand, and Roman conquests down to the end of the first Punic war. From a literary point of view, the Chow dynasty was the age of the *Vedas* in India; of Homer, Æschylus, Herodotus, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Aristotle, and Demosthenes, in Greece; of the Jewish prophets from Samuel to Daniel; and of the Talmud as originally undertaken by the Scribes, subsequent to the return from captivity in Babylon.

## THE GREAT EXHIBITION AT LIN-T'UNG.

[The following extract is a translation from the *History of the Feudal States*, of which work Mr. A. WYLIE says, "although written in the form of a novel, it differs less from authentic history probably than any other in the same category." It is simply the story of a bogus exhibition, planned by the scheming State of Ch'in, nominally to make a collection of valuables and hand them over as respectful tribute to the sovereign House of Chow, but really with a view to a general massacre of the rival nobles who stood in the way between the Ch'ins and their treasonable designs.]

Duke Ai of Ch'in now proceeded with his various officers of State to prepare a place for the proposed exhibition, at the same time setting a number of armed men in ambuscade, with a view to carry out his ambitious designs; and when he heard that the other nobles had arrived, he went out and invited them to come in. The usual ceremonies over, and the nobles having taken their seats according to precedence, Duke Ai addressed the meeting as follows:—

"I, having reverently received the commission of the Son of Heaven, do hereby open this assembly for the exhibition of such valuables as may be brought together from all parts of the empire, the same to be subsequently packed together, and forwarded as tribute to our Imperial master. And since you nobles are now all collected here in this place, it is fitting that our several exhibits be forthwith produced and submitted for adjudication."

Sounds of assent from the nobles were heard at the conclusion of this speech; but the Prime Minister of the Ch'i State, conscious that the atmosphere was

heavily laden with the vapour of death, as if from treacherous ambush, stepped forward and said:—

“Of old, when the nobles were wont to assemble, it was customary to appoint one just and upright member to act as arbiter or judge of the meeting; and now that we have thus met for the purposes of this exhibition, I propose, in the interest of public harmony, that some one of us be nominated arbiter in a similar way.”

Duke Ai readily agreed to the above proposition, and immediately demanded of the assembled nobles who among them would venture to accept the office indicated. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when up rose Pien Chuang, generalissimo of the forces of Chêng, and declared that he was ready to undertake the post. Duke Ai then asked him upon what grounds, as to personal ability, he based his claim; to which Pien Chuang replied, “Of ability I have little indeed, but I have slain a tiger with one blow of my fist, and in martial prowess I am second to none. Upon this I base my claim.”

Accordingly, Duke Ai called for a golden tablet, and was on the point of investing him as arbiter of the exhibition, when a voice was heard from among the retainers of the Wu state, loudly urging, “The slayer of a tiger need be possessed only of physical courage; but how is that a sufficient recommendation for this office? Delay awhile, I pray, until I come and take the tablet myself.”

By this time Duke Ai had seen that the speaker was K'uai Hui, son of the Duke of Wei, and forthwith

inquired of him what his particular claim to the post might be. "I cut the head off a deadly dragon, and for that feat I claim this post." Duke Ai thereupon ordered Pien Chuang to transfer to him the golden tablet; but this he refused to do, arguing that the slaughter of a dragon was simply a magician's trick, and not at all to the present purpose. He added that if the tablet was to be taken from him, it would necessitate an appeal to force between himself and his rival. The contest continued thus for some time, until at length the Prime Minister of Ch'ï rose again, and solved the difficulty in the following terms:—

"The slaughter of a tiger involves physical courage, and the slaughter of a dragon is a magician's trick; hence, neither of these acts embraces that combination of mental and physical power which we desire in the arbiter of this meeting. Now, in front of the palace there stands a sacrificial vessel which weighs about a thousand pounds. Let Duke Ai give out a theme; and then let him who replies thereto with most clearness and accuracy, and who can moreover seize the aforesaid vessel, and carry it round the platform on which the eighteen representative nobles are seated, be nominated to the post of arbiter, and receive the golden tablet."

To this plan Duke Ai assented; and writing down a theme, bade his attendants exhibit it among the heroes of the assembled States. The theme was in rhyme, and contained these eight lines:—

Say what supports the sky; say what supports the earth:  
What is the mystic number which to the universe gave birth?

Whence come the eddying waves of the river's rolling might ?  
Where shall we seek the primal germ of the mountain's towering  
height ?

By which of the elements five is the work of nature done ?  
And of all the ten thousand things that are, say which is the  
wondrous *one*.

Such are the questions seven which I now propound to you ;  
And he who can answer them straight and well is the trusty man  
and true.

The theme had hardly been uttered, when up started  
Chi Nien, generalissimo of the Ch'in State, and cried out,  
"This is but a question of natural philosophy ; what dif-  
ficulty is there in it ?" He thereupon advanced to the  
front ; and, having obtained permission to compete, seized  
a stylus, and wrote down the following reply :—

Nothing supports the sky ; nothing supports the earth :  
How can we guess at the number which to the universe gave birth ?  
From the reaches above come the eddying waves of the river's  
rolling might :

How can we tell where to look for the germ of the mountain's  
towering height ?

By *all* the elements five is the work of Nature done ;  
And of all the ten thousand things that are there is no particular *one*.  
There you have my replies to the questions set by you ;  
And the arbiter's post I hereby claim as the trusty man and true.

Chi Nien, having delivered this answer, proceeded  
to tuck up his robe, and, passing to the front of the  
palace, seized with both hands the sacrificial vessel,  
and raised it some two feet from the ground, his whole  
face becoming suffused with colour under the effort.  
At the same time there arose a great noise of drums and  
horns, and all the assembled nobles applauded loudly ;  
whereupon Duke Ai personally invested him with the  
golden tablet, and proclaimed him arbiter of the



exhibition, for which Chi Nien was just about to return thanks, when suddenly up jumped Wu Yüan, generalissimo of the Ch'u State, and coming forward, declared in an angry tone that Chi Nien's answer did not dispose of the theme in a proper and final manner; that he had not removed the sacrificial vessel from its place; and that consequently he had not earned the appointment which Wu Yüan now contended should be bestowed upon himself. Duke Ai, in view of his scheme for seizing the persons of the various nobles, was naturally anxious that the post of arbiter should fall to one of his own officers, and was much displeased at this attempt on the part of Wu Yüan; however, he replied that if the latter could dispose of the theme and carry round the sacrificial vessel, the office of arbiter would be his. Wu Yüan thereupon took a stylus, and indited the following lines:—

The earth supports the sky; the sky supports the earth.

*Five* is the mystic number which to the universe gave birth.

From the sky come the eddying waves of the river's rolling might.

In the Kun-lun range we must seek the germ of the mountain's towering height.

By *truth*, of the elements five,\* can most good work be done;

And of all the ten thousand things that are, *man* is the wondrous one.

There you have my replies to the questions set this day;

The answers are clear, and straight to the point, and given without delay.

As soon as he had finished writing, he handed his reply to Duke Ai, who at once saw that he had in every

\* Each of the five physical elements—earth, wood, metal, water, fire—has a corresponding moral equivalent, one of which has, by a figure of rhetoric, been here substituted.

way disposed of the theme with far greater skill than Chi Nien, and accordingly now bade him show his strength upon the sacrificial vessel. Wu Yüan immediately stepped forward, and, holding up his robe with his left hand, seized the vessel with his right, raising it up and bearing it round the platform before the assembled nobles, and finally depositing it in its original place, without so much as changing colour. The nobles gazed at each other in astonishment at this feat, and with one accord, declared him to be the hero of the day ; so that Duke Ai had no alternative but to invest him with the golden tablet, and announce his appointment to the post of arbiter. Wu Yüan thanked the Duke in appropriate terms, and then proceeded to say :—

“Your servant, though devoid of ability, has received this appointment at the hands of you nobles here present. He has heard that a ship without a rudder is at the mercy of the wind, and that a steel-yard without its weight is no adjuster of quantities. As arbiter of this meeting, your servant will speak out plainly, and will conceal nothing ; but in anticipation of disturbance and insubordination on the part of any of the competitors, it will be necessary for you nobles first of all to confer full authority to deal with the same, or otherwise your servant will not venture to take up this post.”

Duke Ai looked round upon the assembled nobles, and observing that Wu Yüan's request was regarded as perfectly in accordance with what was right, presented him with a sharp sword, and ordered him, in all such cases as he had just mentioned, to slay the offender on

the spot, and then report the matter for investigation. Wu Yüan again tendered his thanks; and taking his stand upon the steps of the pavilion, summoned the nobles to produce their exhibits for adjudication before entering into a solemn pact of mutual alliance. The exhibits were now brought forth, and displayed for the decision of the arbiter. They consisted of the following rarities:—

(1). A goblet, possessing the peculiar property of warming all wine poured into it in winter, and of cooling all wine poured into it in summer. [Exhibited by the Ch'in State.]

(2). A precious stone, so brilliant as to light up a large hall by night, in the same way as a lamp. [Exhibited by the Ch'i State.]

(3). A double sword, having two blades fitting into the same scabbard, each of which would cry out if the other was missing, and possessing also the power of decapitating devils. [Exhibited by the Lu State.]

(4). A crystal screen able to raise wind or bring down rain; and which, when thrown into the water, could separate the waves on each side of it. [Exhibited by the Chin State.]

(5). A curious mirror which, when placed on the bed of a river or at the bottom of the sea, resembled the moon, and lighted up the surrounding waters. [Exhibited by the Sung State.]

(6). An umbrella which would effectually keep off rain and snow from the person holding it, and disperse sand and dust. [Exhibited by the Chêng State.]

(7). A coral pillow, reclining upon which a drunken man would become sober, a sick man well, a heated man cool, and a chilly man warm. [Exhibited by the Wu State.]

(8). A marvellous stone which, when placed in a room swept by draughts, would cause such a stillness in the air that not a feather would be moved. [Exhibited by the Wei State.]

(9). An *as-you-wish*, able to induce either joy or anger as desired, and, when placed up the sleeve, to bring about the realisation of any hope. [Exhibited by the Yen State.]

(10). An agate plate which would play tunes on being struck. [Exhibited by the Yüeh State.]

(11). A fan, by means of which a cool wind could be produced in summer. [Exhibited by the T'êng State.]

(12). A girdle of rhinoceros horn, possessing the property of dividing water, of extinguishing fire, and of curing all diseases. [Exhibited by the Hsieh State.]

(13). A wonderful mirror which would reflect everything for more than thirty miles round, including the forms of devils and bogies. [Exhibited by the Chü State.]

(14). A marvellous sword, which could sever rainbows and ward off wind and rain. [Exhibited by the Hsü State.]

The other States having brought nothing to exhibit, Duke Ai demanded to know from them why the Imperial command had been disobeyed ; to which the Dukes Ts'ai and Ch'ên replied by making an obeisance and saying, "Our humble territories are limited in area, and

so unproductive that we have nothing worthy of exhibition at this meeting. Afraid, however, to disregard entirely the Imperial wishes, we have come hither ourselves even though empty-handed, and now pray that our case may be represented for the merciful consideration of the Son of Heaven."

Duke Ai was unwilling to look at their omission in this light; and referring to the arbiter inquired of him what would be a fitting punishment to award. The arbiter observed that when the Great Yü marked out the nine divisions of the empire, he arranged that each district was to pay a tribute of local products, a scheme which was subsequently adopted by the first sovereign of the Chows at the overthrow of the dynasty of Shang. "And although," he continued, "this exhibition is nominally one of rare or costly articles, still, if any States are from natural causes deficient in these, there seems to be no reason why they should not be permitted to fall back upon local products."

Reflecting for a few moments on this suggestion, Duke Ai replied as follows:—"That certain of these States should be unable to compete in costly articles is perhaps not a subject for surprise; but pray tell me how it is that the State of Ch'u, a fief estimated at a thousand chariots, with a rich soil and a prosperous population, is also without exhibits at this meeting?"

"We men of Ch'u," rejoined the arbiter, "deem virtue our most precious jewel;" upon which Duke Ai promptly remarked that with their history of war and slaughter, desolation of homes and states, and

desecration of sacred places beyond number, he should be glad to be informed where any particular manifestation of 'virtue' came in.

"All that you have enumerated," retorted the arbiter, "we learned from the example of your Highness' own honourable State, and small blame to us. What I mean with regard to virtue is simply this: that in the State of Ch'u, prince and subject, father and son, severally fulfil the due obligations attaching to conditions of prince, subject, father, and son; that the scholar, the husbandman, the artisan, and the merchant, peacefully pursue their various callings; and that no one picks up property lost upon the highway. The result is a high standard of morals, and successful administration of public affairs. These are the 'jewels' which give strength and repose to my humble State, and which are in no sense to be placed in comparison with your inch-square pearls and your three-foot poniards."

Now when Duke Ai, whose intention it had been to reprimand the Ch'u State for bringing nothing to the exhibition, received instead this open rebuke himself, he was unable to say a word; and when the nobles saw what a defeat he had suffered at the hands of the arbiter, they secretly rejoiced and praised the latter exceedingly, while on the other hand some of the Duke's flattering courtiers inquired what answer could be made to the Son of Heaven in respect of this serious omission.

"Do you, nobles," cried the arbiter, "confine yourselves to signing the instrument of confederation, and leave me to report our neglect to the Son of Heaven."

Thereupon he proceeded to slay a black ox and a white horse, and to perform the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. These being concluded, he took in his left hand a bowl of the freshly-shed blood, and brandishing in his right his sharp sword, he mounted the steps leading up to the pavilion, and cried aloud to the assembled nobles as follows :—

“All you chieftains who are present at this meeting do hereby covenant to act, as rulers, considerately; as subjects, loyally;\* as fathers, kindly; as sons, lovingly. You agree to exchange mutual courtesies in times of sorrow and of joy; to live in peace and harmony with one another; to acknowledge the supremacy of the Imperial house of Chow, and to pay tribute accordingly. And it is further covenanted that any breach of faith on the part of any one of the contracting parties shall be punished by the rest, united together for that purpose.”

At this speech all the assembled nobles bowed their heads, and drinking the blood of the sacrifice, called out in reply, “We hereby bind ourselves to obey without fail the injunctions thus set forth;” whereupon the arbiter, having fully settled the terms of alliance, placed the deed of confederation in a golden casket. He next collected together the costly exhibits of the various States, and forwarded them as tribute to the Court of Chow; after which all the representatives sat down to take part in a grand banquet.

Let us now revert to Kung-sun Hou. He, seeing

\* That is, to the sovereign house of Chow.

that the original plot had failed, in consequence of the appointment of Wu Yüan as arbiter, at once issued orders to the soldiers in attendance to wait until the wine had freely circulated and then to take Wu Yüan, dead or alive, as a first step towards finally crushing the power of the States. Now the guests were scarcely more than half tipsy, when Chi Kuang of the Wu State interrupted the decorum of the banquet by accidentally breaking a jade bowl. This so enraged Duke Ai that he shouted in a loud voice to the guard to arrest for him the man who could venture to insult his superiors by such a flagrant breach of propriety.

“Hold!” cried Wu Yüan, the arbiter, at this juncture; “all things have their appointed issues, and man is not infallible. Duke Mu, of old, did not take vengeance on those who stole his horse, and Prince Chuang could pardon even a dose of leeches.\* And although Chi Kuang has undoubtedly committed a breach of decorum in breaking the bowl, surely your Highness will not be outdone in magnanimity.” Duke Ai, however, would not listen to the arbiter, and Kung-sun Hou began to tap on the wooden rattle, at which a number of soldiers rushed in from all sides and seized Chi Kuang, as if in open defiance of the assembled nobles.

“Hold!” cried the arbiter again; “this is no place for martial demonstrations, but the scene of a friendly conference of States. If this young noble is put to death, will it not be taking an undue advantage over

\* Which he is said to have swallowed, through inadvertence of his prescribing physician.



the body of representatives who are not provided even with half an inch of protecting steel?" These words, coupled with Wu Yüan's general demeanour, so alarmed Kung-sun Hou that Chi Kuang was immediately released; and then Wu Yüan continued:—"Nobles, our business is at an end: the banquet is over. Let us return to our respective homes without delay."

Thereupon, a move was made among the guests; and Wu Yüan, turning to Duke Ai, said, "As your Highness has been the president of this conference, and as I have reason to suspect an armed attack to be made upon us when leaving your court, I pray you send a guard to escort us safely to the frontier; otherwise, in case of accident, your State will be held responsible." Duke Ai had no option but to accede to this request, and forthwith gave orders to Tzŭ-t'ieh, his general, to carry out the wishes of the arbiter; and before Tzŭ-t'ieh had had time to think, Wu Yüan had got him up on horseback, and seizing his hand, said to him, "Your Excellency is a pillar of this State and a representative of the public. Without your escort we should not dare to start upon our journey." Tzŭ-t'ieh accordingly set out to escort the nobles on their homeward journey. For several miles there was an uninterrupted stream of official hats and red umbrellas; but the soldiers of the Ch'in State, who were lying in ambush, did not attack the cavalcade, seeing that it was under the escort of one of their own officers. And thus the assembled nobles and their retinues passed over the frontier in safety; and then Wu Yüan released the hand of Tzŭ-t'ieh, and bade him a final farewell.

## II.—THE HANS.

B.C. 200—A.D. 200.

It has been stated that the Imperial rule of the Chows over the vassal States which made up the China of those early days, was gradually undermined by the growing power and influence of one of the latter, the very name of which was transformed into a by-word of reproach, so that to call a person a 'man of Ch'in' was equivalent to saying, in vulgar parlance, 'He is no friend of mine.' The struggle between the Ch'ins and the rest of the empire may be likened to the struggle between Athens and the rest of Greece, though the end in each case was not the same. The State of Ch'in vanquished its combined opponents, and finally established a dynasty—short-lived, indeed, but containing among the few rulers who sat upon the throne, only about fifty years in all, the name of one remarkable man, the 'First Emperor' of a united China.

On the ruins of the old feudal system, the landmarks of which his three or four predecessors had succeeded in sweeping away, the 'First Emperor' laid the foundations of a coherent empire which was to date from himself as its founder. He sent an army of 300,000 men to fight against the Huns. He despatched a fleet

to search for some mysterious islands off the coast of China ; and this expedition has since been connected seriously with the colonisation of Japan. He built the Great Wall, which is nearly 1,400 miles in length, twenty-two feet in height, and twenty feet in thickness, forming the most prominent artificial object on the surface of the earth. His copper coinage was so uniformly good that the cowry disappeared altogether from commerce with this reign. According to some, the modern hair-pencil, employed by the Chinese as a pen, was invented about this time, to be used for writing on silk ; while the characters themselves underwent certain modifications and orthographical improvements. The 'First Emperor' desired above all things to impart a fresh stimulus to literary effort ; but he adopted singularly unfortunate means to secure this desirable end. For, listening to the insidious flattery of courtiers, he determined that literature should begin anew with his reign. He therefore issued orders for the destruction of all existing books, with the exception of works treating of medicine, agriculture, and divination, and the annals of his own house ; and he actually put to death many hundreds of the *literati* who refused to comply with these commands. Numbers of valuable works thus perished in a general literary conflagration, popularly known as the 'Burning of the Books ;' and it is partly to accident and partly to the pious efforts of the scholars of the age that posterity is indebted for the preservation of the most precious relics of ancient Chinese literature. But the 'First Emperor' went the way of all flesh ; and

his son and successor, the 'Second Emperor' and last of the line, was shortly afterwards compelled to follow his great father—a victim to the treachery of an ambitious eunuch. Meanwhile, an insurrection had broken out. A peasant forced his way to the front, and finally seated himself firmly upon the throne as the first emperor of the Hans.

The stately house of Han ruled over China for four hundred years, accidentally divided into two equal portions by the Christian era and by a temporary usurpation of the throne which for some time threatened the stability of the dynasty in the direct line of succession. During the whole period, the empire, if not enjoying uninterrupted tranquillity either at home or abroad, was nevertheless making vast strides towards a more settled state of prosperity and civilisation. There were, however, constant wars with the Tartar tribes to the north, against which the Great Wall proved to be a wholly ineffectual barrier. Also, with the various Turkic tribes on the west; especially with the Huns, who once succeeded in shutting up the founder of the dynasty in one of his own cities, from which he only escaped by a stratagem to be related in another connection. Later on, an attempt was made to win over a Hun chieftain, who happened to be visiting the court, by bestowing upon him a distinguished Chinese lady to share with him the honour and dignity of his Khanate; and even now traces of Hunnish influence are discernible in several of the recognised surnames of the Chinese. The wild tribes of modern Yunnan were reduced to

subjection, and their territory may be considered as added to the empire from this date.

At home, the eunuchs gave an immense deal of trouble by their restless spirit of intrigue; besides which, for nearly twenty years the Imperial power was in the hands of a famous usurper, named Wang Mang, who had secured it by the usual means of treachery and poison, to lose it on the battle-field and himself to perish shortly afterwards in a revolt of his own soldiery. This dynasty also witnessed the spectacle—most unusual in the East—of a woman wielding the Imperial sceptre; and hers was not a reign calculated to inspire the people of China with much faith either in the virtue or the administrative ability of the sex. In Chinese history, however, her place is that of the only female sovereign who ever legitimately occupied the throne.

The founder of the Hans, on his entry into the capital of the fallen Ch'ins, at once issued a proclamation embodying what have since been known as the 'Three Laws,' the object in view being to attach the people to his cause by an abandonment of the more barbarous legal penalties in force at that date. By these laws, murder was still to be punished with death, but wounding and robbery only in proportion to the act committed. His next care was to entrust an able and faithful adherent, named Hsiao Ho, with the construction of a Penal Code, which was ultimately published, and contained no fewer than 359 statute laws, upon one of which, namely capital punishment, we read that there were 409 additional clauses and 13,472 quoted

precedents. It was at any rate upon the model thus made available that later dynasties framed their various Codes, each with such modifications as altered circumstances might dictate.

It was under the Han dynasty that the religion of Shâkyamuni Buddha first became known to the Chinese people. We read in the *History of the Later Hans* that "the Emperor Ming had a vision of a golden being over ten feet in height, around whose head was playing a brilliant light. On asking his assembled ministers about this dream, one of them said that in the West there was a god, named Fo, sixteen feet high, and of the colour of gold. So the Emperor sent off envoys to India to inquire about the religion of Fo, and these brought back the images and portraits we now possess." Another passage runs: "The books of their priests consist chiefly of the glorification of hollowness and abstraction. With them, compassion is one of the highest virtues. They do not take life. They believe that the vitality of man does not perish with the body at death, but is again endued with a mortal shape. They expect rewards and punishments according to their good or evil acts in a previous life, and are therefore very particular about cultivating rectitude of heart, in order to become Buddhas hereafter."

The quiet philosophy of Lao-tzŭ was meanwhile undergoing a fundamental change. It had begun to degenerate into a hocus-pocus system, the ultimate objects of which were avowedly the transmutation of metals and the preparation of an elixir of immortal life.

A grandson of the founder of the dynasty, occupying a high position in the public service, and commonly known as Huai Nan Tzŭ, identified himself closely with these researches, and bequeathed to posterity a mystic work which now forms part of the Taoist canon, under the title of the *History of Great Light*.

It was also during this period that the Jews appear to have founded a colony in Honan, but we cannot say what kind of reception was accorded to the new faith. In the glow of early Buddhism, and in the exciting times of its subsequent persecution, it is probable that Judaism failed to attract much serious attention from the Chinese. A synagogue was built at K'ai-fung Fu in 1164, and the Catholic priest Ricci visited the colony in the sixteenth century. In 1850, certain Hebrew rolls were recovered from the few remaining descendants of former Jews; but there was then no one left who could read a word of them, or who possessed any knowledge of the creed of their forefathers beyond a few traditions of the scantiest possible kind.

But the most remarkable of all events connected with our present period was the general revival of learning and authorship. The Confucian texts were rescued from hiding-places in which they had been concealed at the risk of death; editing committees were appointed, and immense efforts made to repair the mischief sustained by literature at the hands of the 'First Emperor.' The schoolmen of the day expounded the records and teachings of the great Sage according to their lights:

and although the practical outcome of their labours was later on scattered to the wind by the genius of one man, the bulky commentaries they put together still survive, to be perused by the curious and accepted by the few. Ink was invented under the Hans, to replace such mixtures as brick-dust and water, with which characters had already been traced on silk; and paper, made from the bark of trees and from hemp, followed shortly after. The result of these inventions was a further modification of the written character from that previously in use, and suitable to the stylus and tablets of bamboo, to a form which could be more rapidly committed to paper with the aid of the hair pencil. Authorship was then enabled to make a fresh start—the very start indeed that the ‘First Emperor’ had longed to associate with his own reign, and had attempted to secure by such impracticable means.

The ‘father of Chinese history’ flourished during the latter portion of the second century B.C. His great work, which has been the model for all subsequent histories, is divided into 130 books, and deals with a period extending from the reign of the Yellow Emperor down to his own times. This narrative was subsequently taken up by Pan Ku a century and a half later, and completed after his death by a gifted sister, who brought the work down to Wang Mang’s usurpation of the throne.

In another branch of literature, a foremost place among the lexicographers of the world may fairly be claimed for Hsü Shên, the author of the famous dictionary known as the *Shuo Wên*, though it was not until



quite recently that he was accorded a niche in the Valhalla of Chinese literature, the temple of Confucius. His work consisted of about 10,000 separate characters in the tablet-and-stylus form, commonly called the 'Lesser Seal,'—*seal*, because for many centuries it has been a favourite style for legends on public and private seals and similar inscriptions; *lesser*, to distinguish it from the older style (of which it was a modification) in use during the early days of the Chow dynasty. It was systematically arranged for purposes of reference, and the meaning and scope of each character were more or less elucidated by short explanatory entries. The keynote to the whole lies in an attempt to establish the 'hieroglyphic' origin of the written language; and in this respect the author fails, from disregard of scientific method and from grotesque exaggeration, to carry his readers with him. On the other hand, he has left us an ample and valuable record of the written character of eighteen centuries ago, from an inspection of which we learn that the principle of phonetic formation was then as fully developed as it is now, leaving us to infer that a considerable interval must necessarily have elapsed between the beginnings of the art and an age in which it was already so fully developed.

Many other voluminous works and celebrated writers of the Han dynasty could here be mentioned at the risk of tiring the reader with an overburdened page. But these we will reluctantly pass over, to conclude with the honoured name of one man who ensured for himself, by his virtue and integrity, a more imperishable fame

than any mere literary achievement could bestow. Yang Chên was indeed a scholar of no mean attainments, and away in his occidental home he was known as 'the Confucius of the West.' An officer of government in a high position, with every means of obtaining wealth at his command, he lived and died in comparative poverty, his only object of ambition being the reputation of a 'spotless official.' The Yangs of his day grumbled sorely at opportunities thus thrown away; but the Yangs of to-day glory in the fame of their great ancestor, and are proud to worship in the ancestral hall to which his uprightness has bequeathed a name. For once, when pressed to receive a bribe, with the additional inducement that no one would know of the transaction, he quietly replied—"How so? Heaven would know; Earth would know; you would know; and I should know." And to this hour the ancestral shrine of the clan of the Yangs bears as its name 'The Hall of the Four Knows.'

It was, in all probability, under the dynasty of the Hans that the drama first took its place among the amusements of the people, though some defer its appearance until eight or nine centuries later, and attribute its origin to a dream of one of the Emperors of the T'angs, in which he fancied himself on a visit to the moon. Now, when the founder of the Hans was besieged, as has been stated, by an army of Huns, His Majesty, acting under the advice of a crafty minister, sent a messenger to the Hun chieftain and offered him the present of a very beautiful girl on condition of being

allowed to pass unharmed through his lines. The Hun chieftain, suspicious of treachery, repaired by agreement to the foot of the city wall, and there beheld a charming young lady moving about among a circle of attendants almost as lovely as herself. His suspicions being thus allayed, he gave orders to open a passage to the Emperor and his suite, who promptly made the best of their way out. At the same time, the Hun chieftain entered the city and proceeded to the spot on the wall where the young lady was awaiting him, still surrounded by her bevy of handmaids; but on arriving there, he found, to his infinite chagrin, that the beauty and her attendants were simply a set of wooden puppets which had been dressed up for the occasion, and were worked by a concealed arrangement of strings. Overcome with rage and mortification, he instantly started in pursuit of the flying Emperor, who however succeeded in making good his escape. From that day Punch and Judy shows are said to have come into existence, if indeed the term 'Punch and Judy' be not somewhat of a misnomer. For the marionettes of China are unconnected in any way with the loves and hatreds of our own Mr. Punch. The former exhibit to Chinese crowds of men, women, and children, stirring episodes taken from the history of ancient China, relieved by occasional farces of rather questionable decency. Emperors, generals, crafty mandarins, and intriguing women, strut backwards and forwards across the mimic stage, and teach their lessons of worldly wisdom in the local dialect of the audience. No money is collected on the spot, the proprietors of

the show being paid out of the theatrical fund of the street or village, sometimes by a well-to-do citizen, to give their entertainment free to all comers.

The custom of burying slaves with the dead was abolished early in the dynasty by the same enlightened emperor, who reduced the twenty-seven months' mourning for parents to a more manageable period of twenty-seven days. Literary degrees were first established; and the existing calendar was corrected to accord with the calculations of the historian Ssü-ma Ch'ien. Perpetual hereditary rank was conferred upon the senior descendant of Confucius in the male line, and the succession has continued unbroken to the present day. The head of the 'K'ungs,' or Confucian clan, is now a 'duke,' and resides in a palace, taking rank with, if not before, the highest provincial authorities. Later on, the written language of China and the teachings of Confucius were carried over to Japan, to be there received with unmingled veneration for many centuries, and to shape the educational curriculum of the people and the national bent of thought, until destined in recent days to pale before the flood of a brighter light.

During the above period, Greece had fallen from her high estate and had become a Roman province. Her literary activity seemed to be extinguished simultaneously with the loss of her *prestige* and political supremacy; and the tide of production, which in little more than a hundred years had made Greek literature what it is, was stopped for ever. Hannibal had been finally vanquished: Christ had been crucified: Julius Cæsar had visited

Britain: Augustus had been saluted Emperor: and St. Paul had been brought in chains to Rome.

The close of the Han dynasty, and the rise of the 'Three Kingdoms' into which the empire was for a short time divided, form one of the most interesting portions of Chinese history. It was essentially an age of heroes, of martial prowess, of bold attack and skilled defence, of Odyssean cunning and Hectorean courage. On the other hand, the empire was deluged in blood; cities were sacked, homes desolated, and vast tracts converted into desert solitudes. An invasion of the Tibetans, followed by a rebellion, popularly known as the revolt of the 'Yellow Turbans,' and coupled with palace intrigues, were the primary causes of all the trouble, which began with a temporary usurpation of the throne, the eunuchs being as usual in the thick of the mischief. Able generals came to the front in unusual numbers, the result being that each one of these, either foreseeing or intending the early overthrow of the reigning house, began to consult his own personal interests and entertain the most ambitious designs. Foremost among these was Ts'ao Ts'ao, whose long and brilliant campaigns eventually placed not himself but his son upon the throne of one of the Three Kingdoms. Second only to Ts'ao Ts'ao, and for some time one of his lieutenants, was Liu Pei, who was distantly connected with the Imperial family. Like his above-mentioned commander, his early laurels were gained in fighting against the Yellow Turbans and in aiding to crush their rebellion; and like him, he too

became a leader on his own account, finally establishing himself, under the direction of his great general and counsellor, Chu-ko Liang (*or* K'ung-ming), as Emperor of a second of the Three Kingdoms. In his early days, Liu Pei had fallen in with two kindred spirits, Chang Fei and Kuan Yü; and the three, after having sworn an oath of eternal fidelity to each other in a peach-orchard, continued through life to fight together side by side. Chang Fei fell by the hand of an assassin, and Kuan Yü was taken prisoner by Sun Ch'üan, a rival general, and beheaded. The latter became Emperor of the third of the Three Kingdoms, while Kuan Yü, the greatest military hero of all Chinese history, was first of all canonised as a saint and subsequently promoted to the rank of a God. He is now the guardian angel of every Chinese city, and plays a prominent part in the Chinese pantheon as the God of War.

The whole story of these civil wars is most graphically told in a famous historical romance composed about 1,000 years afterwards. A considerable element of fiction has been interwoven with truth to make the narrative more palatable to the general reader; but its basis is history, and the work is universally regarded among the Chinese themselves as one of the most valuable productions in the lighter branches of their literature. The annexed extract is given chiefly because of the allusion it contains to the use of anæsthetics at an early date.

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EXTRACT FROM THE *STORY OF THE  
THREE STATES.*

[After the death of Kuan Yü, as already narrated, his head was forwarded to Ts'ao Ts'ao; and the latter became from that moment terribly disturbed in spirit, fancying always when he shut his eyes at night that he saw before him the gory countenance of his once dreaded foe. To such a pitch was he worked by this constant strain on his nerves that he finally determined to quit his old palace at Lo-Yang, which he began to believe was haunted by Kuan Yü's ghost, and build himself a new residence, free from all supernatural influences. With this view he caused a skilled artisan, named Su Yüeh, to be brought before him, and proceeded to make arrangements for carrying his plan into execution.]

"Ten miles or so from the city," said Su Yüeh, "there is a pool called the Pool of the Jumping Dragon. In front of that pool there is a shrine, and alongside of the shrine there grows a tall pear-tree, some hundred feet and more in height. That tree would do to make the beam of your Highness' projected palace."

Ts'ao Ts'ao was greatly pleased, and sent off workmen to fell it forthwith. These, however, returned after a few days and reported that no saw or axe had any effect on the tree, and that they could not cut it down. Unable to believe their report, Ts'ao Ts'ao himself started at the head of several hundred horsemen, and on arriving at the pool alighted from his horse before the shrine. Looking up, he beheld a straight and stately tree which reared its head among the clouds. He immediately gave orders to begin cutting; upon which the village elders came out and attempted to remonstrate with him, urging that the tree was several hundred years old and was inhabited by a spirit, and that in their opinion it could not be cut down.

"What!" cried Ts'ao Ts'ao, in anger; "shall I who have roamed over the world for the past forty years, the terror of all men from the Son of Heaven down to the meanest of his subjects—shall I be crossed in my design by some trumpery hobgoblin?" Thereupon he drew his sword and attacked the tree with his own hands. *Chng-g-g* rang the metal as it touched the wood; and the next moment Ts'ao Ts'ao was covered with blood, at which he was so alarmed that he threw aside his sword, vaulted on his horse, and rode home.

That night he was restless and unable to sleep, and while he was sitting up with his head bowed upon his arms as he leant over the table, lo! a man with dishevelled hair and dressed in black garments came and stood sword in hand before him. "I," cried the man, pointing with his finger at Ts'ao Ts'ao, "I am the spirit of the pear-tree. You would build a palace in furtherance of your seditious designs, for which you attempted to make use of my glorious timber; but I, knowing that your hour is at hand, have come hither to slay you." Ts'ao Ts'ao was terribly alarmed and called out to the guard; whereupon the black-coated man struck him a blow with his sword, which caused him to utter a loud cry, and immediately afterwards he felt a severe and almost unbearable pain in his head. Orders were at once issued for a search to be made for some skilful leech; but none were of any avail, and Ts'ao Ts'ao's officers were sad at heart.

At this juncture, Hua Hsin addressed the commander-in-chief and said, "Does your Highness not know of the



marvellous skill of Dr. Hua T'o?" in reply to which Ts'ao Ts'ao inquired if he meant the doctor of Chiang-tung who had cured Chou T'ai; and on being informed that the latter was the individual in question, remarked that he was acquainted with Dr. Hua by reputation only. "Dr. Hua," explained Hua Hsin, "is a mighty skilful physician, and such a one as is not often to be found. His administration of drugs, and his use of acupuncture and counter-irritants, are always followed by the speedy recovery of the patient. If the sick man is suffering from some internal complaint and medicines produce no satisfactory result, then Dr. Hua will administer a dose of hashish, under the influence of which the patient becomes as it were intoxicated with wine. He now takes a sharp knife and opens the abdomen, proceeding to wash the patient's viscera with medicinal liquids, but without causing him the slightest pain. The washing finished, he sews up the wound with medicated thread and puts over it a plaster; and by the end of a month or twenty days the place has healed up. Such is his extraordinary skill. One day, for instance, as he was walking along a road he heard someone groaning deeply, and at once declared that the cause was indigestion. On inquiry, this turned out to be the case; and accordingly, Dr. Hua ordered him to drink three pints of a decoction of garlic and leeks, which he did, and vomited forth a snake between two and three feet in length—after which he could digest food as before. On another occasion, the Governor of Kuang-ling was very much depressed in his mind, besides being troubled with

a flushing of the face and total loss of appetite. He consulted Dr. Hua, and the effect of some medicine administered by him was to cause the invalid to throw up a quantity of red-headed wriggling tadpoles, which the doctor told him had been generated in his system by too great indulgence in fish, and which, although temporarily expelled, would re-appear after an interval of three years, when nothing could save him. And sure enough, he died three years afterwards. In a further instance, a man had a tumour growing between his eyebrows, the itching of which was insupportable. When Dr. Hua saw it, he said, 'There is a bird inside;' at which everybody laughed. However, he took a knife and opened the tumour, and out flew a canary, the patient beginning to recover from that hour. Again, another man had had his toes bitten by a dog, the consequence being that two lumps of flesh grew up from the wound, one of which was very painful while the other itched unbearably. 'There are ten needles,' said Dr. Hua, 'in the sore lump, and two black and white *wei-ch'i* pips in the other.' No one believed this until Dr. Hua opened them with a knife and showed that it was so. Truly he is of the same strain as Pien Ch'iao and Ts'ang Kung of old; and as he is now living not very far from this, I wonder your Highness does not summon him."

At this, Ts'ao Ts'ao sent away messengers who were to travel day and night until they had brought Dr. Hua before him; and when he arrived, Ts'ao Ts'ao held out his pulse and desired him to diagnose his case.

"The pain in your Highness' head," said Dr. Hua,

"arises from wind, and the seat of the disease is the brain, where the wind is collected, unable to get out. Drugs are of no avail in your present condition, for which there is but one remedy. You must first swallow a dose of hashish, and then with a sharp axe I will split open the back of your head and let the wind out. Thus the disease will be exterminated."

Ts'ao Ts'ao here flew into a great rage, and declared that it was a plot aimed at his life; to which Dr. Hua replied, "Has not your Highness heard of Kuan Yü's wound in the right shoulder? I scraped the bone and removed the poison for him without a single sign of fear on his part. Your Highness' disease is but a trifling affair; why, then, so much suspicion?"

"You may scrape a sore shoulder-bone," said Ts'ao Ts'ao, "without much risk; but to split open my skull is quite another matter. It strikes me now that you are here simply to avenge your friend Kuan Yü upon this opportunity." He thereupon gave orders that the doctor should be seized and cast into prison, to be put to the question, in spite of all the objections raised by Chia Yü against thus throwing away the skill of such an unrivalled practitioner. To this Ts'ao Ts'ao replied that the fellow was another Chi P'ing, and wanted to kill him, at the same time commanding that he should be forthwith bamboosed.

So Dr. Hua was thrown into prison. His gaoler, however, brought him every day presents of wine and food, as a return for which the doctor one day said to him, "I am about to die; and in recognition of your kindness to me, I should like to give you a medical

work by myself, which I have not yet published. It is all I have to offer. Let me prepare a letter, and you can send to my house for the book, by the aid of which you will be enabled to carry on my practice." The gaoler was overjoyed, and said, "If I get that book, I will resign my employment in the gaol, and set to work to relieve suffering humanity, and spread the fame of your virtues far and wide." Dr. Hua then wrote a letter and gave it to the gaoler, who, having obtained the book from the doctor's wife, returned with it to the prison, where it was formally presented to him, and subsequently stored by him at his own home.

Some ten days after these events Dr. Hua died in gaol, and was decently buried by the gaoler, who finally threw up his post, and went off to his house to study medicine from Dr. Hua's book. He reached home just in time to find his wife in the act of burning it; and, indeed, there were only a few leaves remaining when he snatched the book hurriedly from the flames. He cursed her soundly for her folly, but she retorted that she had no wish for him to become as clever as Dr. Hua, and perish in prison like him. Her husband sighed deeply at the loss that the world had sustained by the destruction of the book, for the few leaves that remained had reference only to capons and pigs.

[It remains only to add that Ts'ao Ts'ao never recovered. He soon afterwards became much worse, and knowing that his last hour had arrived, he uttered his final injunctions to those who stood round the bed. "And as he concluded, he heaved a deep sigh; tears trickled down his face like rain; in a few moments he had ceased to breathe, and all was over."]

## III.—THE T'ANGS.

A.D. 600-900.

It is unnecessary to linger over the four centuries which connect the Hans with the T'angs. There was not in them that distinctness of character or coherency of aim which go to make up an 'age' in the sense of these sketches. The Three Kingdoms passed rapidly away. Other small dynasties succeeded them. But their names and dates are not essential to a right comprehension of the state of China, then or now. A few points may, however, be briefly mentioned before quitting this period of transition from the epoch of the Hans to the epoch of the T'angs.

The old rule of twenty-seven months' mourning for parents was re-established, and has continued in force until the present day. Diplomatic relations were opened with Japan; and Christianity was introduced by the Nestorians under the title of the 'luminous teaching.' The *Tea Record* tells us that tea was not known in China before this date, which may be true as regards the particular species of shrub employed in the preparation of the national drink; but an infusion of some kind of leaf was familiar to the Chows, and its name occurs in the *Erh Ya*.

Fa Hsien now performed his marvellous journey from China to India across the Central Asian deserts, and back by Ceylon and the Straits of Malacca. He had remained away fifteen years, and had returned with a practical knowledge of Sanscrit and with a large consignment of Buddhist books. The further impulse thus given to the spread of the religion was very widely felt; and in the history of a petty dynasty one hundred years later, we read, "The emperor wholly devoted himself to the worship of Shâkyamuni. Far and wide the religion extended, until there were none who did not serve Buddha." Previous even to this, the construction of Buddhist temples had been going on, while the ranks of the priesthood had already been largely recruited.

It was at the close of this transitional period that we first detect traces of the art of printing, still in an embryonic stage, and not destined for many years to displace altogether the tedious labours of the scribe. It seems, however, to be quite certain that before the end of the sixth century the Chinese were in possession of a method of reproduction from wooden blocks; but, as far as we can learn, the work was of the roughest description, and made a poor show side by side with the calligraphic triumphs of the day. The written character had already been modified to its present shape, and the old forms were now only seen on seals or on ornamental scrolls.

One of the last emperors of the period was a strange mixture of enterprise and vicious excess. While

committing every imaginable act of folly and extravagance, he nevertheless succeeded in adding largely to the empire by annexation towards the west. He joined the Yang-tsze and the Yellow River by a canal, thus anticipating in some measure the Grand Canal of Kublai Khan. Embassies reached his court from various nations—among others from Japan and Cochin China—and helped to add to the lustre of his reign. But the end came at last; and it was practically over his murdered corpse that the T'angs rose to Imperial power.

The three centuries during which the T'angs sat upon the throne form a brilliant epoch in Chinese history; and just as the northerners still delight to style themselves 'good sons of Han,' so are the more southern people still proud of the designation which has descended to them as 'men of T'ang.' The empire was now once more undivided against itself; and although wars and rebellions were not wanting to disturb the even tenor of its way, the general picture presented to us under the dynasty of the T'angs is one of national peace, prosperity, and progress.

One of the chief political events of the period was the usurpation of power by the Empress Wu; at first, as nominal regent on behalf of a step-child, the son and heir of her late husband by his first empress, but afterwards on her own account. The Empress Wu ruled with a rod of iron, and with much actual ability so long as her great intellectual faculties remained unimpaired; but in her old age she was deposed and

relegated to private life, the rightful heir being replaced upon his father's throne. She had altered the name of the dynasty to 'Chow,' which change, like many others she had sought to introduce, was swept away at her deposition from power. Her title of 'Empress,' as signifying independent sovereignty, is more a sobriquet than anything else. The Empress Wu does not occupy a real place among the sovereigns of China, such as has been accorded to the Empress Lü of the Hans.

But unquestionably the most attractive portion of the whole of the T'ang dynasty is that covered by the forty-four years during which the Emperor Hsüan Tsung (*or* Ming Ti) lapsed from the height of a wise and virtuous ruler to the depth of a corrupt and sensual debauchee. One of his first acts was to publish an edict against the prevailing extravagance in dress; and in order to point the principle by personal practice, he caused all his own valuable wardrobe to be destroyed by fire. He was the founder of a dramatic college, to which purpose he devoted a large section of his Imperial residence, known as the 'Pear Garden,' where male and female actors in great numbers were trained to their respective parts. An enthusiastic patron of literature, he surrounded himself with the wits of the day, among whom are specially noticeable the poets Li T'ai-poh and Tu Fu, the Byron and De Musset of China. The former of these, a poet at the early age of seven, was admitted to an intimacy as unparalleled as it was objectionable in character. On the strength of the beauty of his verses, the Emperor waited upon him with wine and



food, while the Imperial favourite handed him paper, pencil, and ink, the usual outcome of these symposia being the general inebriation of all parties. No wonder that such over-familiarity ended in mutual contempt. The favourite became arrayed against the poet, because of some alleged satirical allusions to her in his poems, and Li T'ai-poh closed his days in the retirement and obscurity of private life.

The T'ang dynasty is otherwise inseparably associated with the highest flights of Chinese poetry. About one hundred and eighty years ago, a *Complete Collection of the Poetry of the T'angs* was published by Imperial command. The work consists of 48,900 different pieces of all kinds, arranged in 900 books. And it may not be out of place to mention here that Chinese prosody is of an extremely complicated nature. As a rule, poems are written in so many columns, with either five or seven characters to each, as previously determined upon, though other metres are in use. The first, second, and fourth columns rhyme; while intricate rules prevail as to the 'tones' of characters in certain places, these being made to correspond rhythmically one with another according to a fixed system. Antithetical collocations, and historical or mythological allusions, must also be of frequent occurrence; figures of speech still more so, it being an almost unpardonable fault to call a spade a spade. Chinese poetry, as may now perhaps be understood by the reader, is precisely that part of the literature which has always been least appreciated by Europeans. It possesses immense attractions for their own scholars,

and the art of making verses holds an important position in their educational curriculum.

The elaboration of 'tones,' or those modulations of the voice by which any given vocable may be pronounced in several different ways according to the meaning required, is usually referred to this period. Mr. Edkins says, "The number of tones increased from two to three by the time of Confucius, to four in the sixth century of our era, and so on to their present state." The subject will be further alluded to when we come to speak of the dialects of modern times.

Meanwhile, Buddhism was fast striking deep roots into a favourable soil. The founder of the dynasty published, indeed, a severe edict against the growing faith; and, towards the close of the T'ang period, another Imperial thunderbolt of the kind was launched at the then firmly established and almost universally-popular religion. Confucianists, rejecting without discrimination all beliefs in supernatural existences, were arrayed among its most bitter enemies; and professors of Taoist mummeries, finding their receipts diminish in direct ratio to the spread of Buddhistic doctrines, joined warmly in the hue and cry. In the other camp were found several weak emperors, and whole seraglios of silly women and crafty eunuchs; the Imperial favour thus lavished on an alien superstition reaching a climax with the determination of his Majesty Hsien Tsung to receive with public honours a bone of Shâkyamuni which had been conveyed with immense care from India overland to China. A lofty tower was prepared, from which the Emperor was

to view a gorgeous procession formed to conduct this precious relic of the world-honoured Buddha within the precincts of the Imperial palace. There was one man, however, the most accomplished of the poets, philosophers, and statesmen of his day, who was unable to look unmoved on this degradation of intellect and of the Imperial dignity. The name of Han Wên-kung is a household word in every Chinese home upon which the light even of a mediocre education has fallen. An ardent student of Confucianism, as seen from the standpoint of the Han scholars, he had succeeded in introducing a theory of his own with regard to the much-vexed question of man's original disposition. He contended that men were born with natures belonging to one or other of three classes. Their tendencies were either innately good, or innately evil, or they occupied a mean place between these extremes. But not one of his efforts attracted so much attention at the time, or has excited so much interest since, as his famous remonstrance to the Emperor regarding the undignified step his Majesty was about to take in the matter of the bone. This protest was conceived in a strain peculiarly Chinese. Han Wên-kung travelled back to the palmy days of Yao and Shun, and showed how happy were the people, and how long-lived were the rulers of old, centuries before any one had ever heard of the Lord Buddha. He passed in review the intervening dynasties, and pointed out that those emperors who had been most inclined to the faith had enjoyed the least share of worldly prosperity. He protested against going to

barbarians in search of the rule of life, and regretted that the Son of Heaven, the master of all beneath the canopy of the sky, should stoop to be taught at their hands. "Supposing, indeed," he argued, "that this Buddha had come to our capital in the flesh, under an appointment from his own State, then your majesty might have received him, with a few words of admonition, bestowing on him a banquet and a suit of clothes, previous to sending him out of the country with an escort of soldiers, in order to avoid any dangerous influence upon the minds of the people. But what are the facts? The bone of a man long since dead and decomposed, is to be admitted, forsooth, within the precincts of the Imperial palace! And yet Confucius said, 'Pay all respect to spiritual beings, but keep them at a distance.'" In conclusion, Han Wên-kung prayed that the bone might be handed over for destruction by fire or water, adding, "Should the Lord Buddha have power to avenge this insult by the infliction of some misfortune, then let the vials of his wrath be poured out upon the person of your majesty's servant, who now calls Heaven to witness that he will not repent him of his oath."

The result of this brilliant appeal was not of a nature to encourage further appeals in the same direction. Han Wên-kung was immediately ordered to take up the post of governor in a wild out-of-the-way region in a distant part of the empire, the district in which the Treaty Port of Swatow now lies. Thither he retired to occupy himself in attempting to civilise the turbulent

clans committed to his charge; and there the memory of his wise and just administration remains still fresh and green, though more than a thousand years have since passed away. It is pleasant to be able to record the fact that this quasi-banishment came eventually to a satisfactory end. Han Wên-kung was ultimately recalled, and died full of honours, being canonised after death under the title of a Prince of Literature.

It was during the reign of the second emperor of the T'angs, and only six years after the Hegira, that the religion of Mahomet is said to have first reached the shores of China. Wahn-Abi-Kabcha, a maternal uncle of the Prophet, visited the country, and obtained permission to build a mosque at Canton, portions of which may perhaps still be found in the thrice-restored structure which now stands upon its site. Nearly a century and a half later, an army of 4,000 Arab soldiers was sent to China by the Caliph Abu Giaffar to assist in quelling an insurrection; and these soldiers, as a reward for their services, were allowed to settle in the country, where they married native wives. They held fast by the faith they had brought with them; but in every other respect, their individuality was soon merged in that of the Chinese people.

The use of paper money was first introduced by the government towards the closing years of the dynasty; and it is near about to this time that we can trace back the existence of the modern Court Circular and daily record of edicts, memorials, and so forth, commonly known as the *Peking Gazette*.

Another unimportant transition period, in this case of only sixty years' duration, forms the connecting link between the great houses of T'ang and Sung. It is known in Chinese history as the period of the Five Dynasties, after the five short-lived dynasties which were all crowded into this brief space of time. It is remarkable chiefly for the more extended practice of printing from wooden blocks, the standard classical works being now for the first time printed in this way, and admitted to a wider circulation than heretofore.

The discreditable custom of cramping women's feet into the so-called 'golden lilies' belongs probably to this date, though referred by some to a period several hundred years earlier. How it originated there is really no sufficient or trustworthy evidence to show; but there is no reason why this, one of the most extraordinary and objectionable features of Chinese social life, should be so thoroughly misunderstood, as is now the case. Even Mr. Herbert Spencer writes: "Obviously these [cramped feet] have become signs of class distinction, because of the implied inability to labour." (*Ceremonial Institutions*, p. 202.) Now, a very common sight in China at the present moment is a small-footed woman, of course of the poorer classes, toiling wearily along under a burden out of all proportion to her strength, even were her feet of the natural size and shape. The fact is, that small feet do not constitute a class distinction in the sense intended by Mr. Spencer. All women of Chinese origin have their feet cramped in infancy, without reference to their social standing, in

opposition to the Manchu or Tartar women, who, from the empress downwards, are never subjected to this process; neither is the custom in force among the Hakkas, a race of ancient Chinese stock, said to have emigrated from northern to southern China some six hundred years ago; nor among the hill-tribes of Formosa and other parts. The Manchus, as will be seen more fully on a later page, are a people alien to the soil of China, who swept down from their home in Manchuria and made themselves masters of the empire in 1644, since which date they have continued in unbroken succession to occupy the Dragon Throne.

We have mentioned above that the age of the T'angs was the age of Mahomet and his new religion, the propagation of which was destined to meet in the west with a fatal check from the arms of Charles Martel at the battle of Tours. It was the age of Rome independent under her early popes; of Charlemagne as Emperor of the West; of Egbert, as first king of England; and of Alfred the Great.

## A VISIT TO THE COUNTRY OF GENTLEMEN.

(FROM THE CHINESE.)\*

Imagine that, instead of preferring to buy things at low prices, men habitually preferred to give high prices for them ; and imagine that, conversely, sellers rejoiced in getting low prices instead of high ones.—HERBERT SPENCER.

The year 684 after the birth of Christ was an eventful year for China. A woman, endowed it is true with a masculine nature and an iron will, set aside with violence the rightful heir, and seated herself exultingly upon the Dragon Throne. She understood, moreover, the difficult art of keeping the empire she had acquired ; and for nearly twenty years the Chinese people had no alternative but to submit. Yet the Empress Wu distinguished her reign by a certain amount of folly and arrogance hardly compatible with the dauntless spirit which had carried her through to victory. For instance, she issued an edict, to be promulgated throughout the empire, commanding every species of flower without a single exception to be in bloom by a given day. Her frivolity, dissipation, and extravagance, formed a common topic of conversation at the public tea-gardens, and tended to bring about a downfall even more rapid than had been her rise to power.

With all this, however, we have now no concern. The story we have to tell is connected with this empress only

\* Translated from Vol. IV. of the *Ching-hua-yüan*.



by the following link. Among her other whims she took it into her head to establish examinations for women, with a view to selecting the successful candidates for posts in the service of the state which had hitherto been confined to men. From the possession of a vigorous intellect in her own case, she probably inferred that many of her sex would be found to be equally gifted if only the chance were given them of bringing their powers into play.

Whatever may have been the cause, it is only certain that this policy gave immediate and unbounded offence to all ranks and classes alike. To none more so than to a young and accomplished scholar, named T'ang Ao, who had just taken the third place in the great triennial examination. He declared that he saw through the hollowness of all earthly honours, and expressed his intention of throwing up a career as brilliant as it was certain, and of roaming abroad for some years in search of knowledge and amusement combined. It chanced that an uncle of his, named Lin, was just on the point of setting out on a long voyage with a cargo of merchandise which he intended to dispose of on his way, bringing back to China a goodly load of valuables from the countries he proposed to visit. He gladly accepted the offer of his nephew's companionship, and introduced him to a third person, who, with his own wife and child, made up a party of five. This was no other than an old man of eighty, who had been travelling about the world ever since he was a boy, and was still hale and hearty enough to take his place with many a younger man. He

was called To, because he knew so *much*,\* and every question of importance was invariably referred to him. They started with a fair wind in a tight ship, talking gaily of all the wonders they expected to see.

And so they sailed along for many days until they arrived at the Country of Gentlemen, where they went on shore and proceeded at once to the capital city. There, over the city gate, T'ang and his companions read the following legend :—

Virtue is man's only jewel !

They then entered the city, which they found to be a busy and prosperous mart, the inhabitants all talking the Chinese language. Accordingly, T'ang accosted one of the passers-by and asked him how it was his nation had become so famous for politeness and consideration of others ; but to his great astonishment the man did not understand the meaning of his question. T'ang then asked him why this land was called the 'Country of Gentlemen,' to which he likewise replied that he did not know. Several other persons of whom they inquired giving similar answers, the venerable To remarked that the term had undoubtedly been adopted by the inhabitants of adjacent countries, in consequence of the polite manners and considerate behaviour of these people. "For," said he, "the very labourers in the fields and foot-passengers in the streets step aside to make room for one another. High and low, rich and poor,

\* *To* means 'much' in Chinese.

mutually respect each other's feelings without reference to the wealth or social status of either ; and this is, after all, the essence of what constitutes the true gentleman."

"In that case," cried T'ang, "let us not hurry on, but rather improve ourselves by observing the ways and customs of this people."

By-and-by they arrived at the market-place, where they saw an official servant\* standing at a stall engaged in making purchases. He was holding in his hand the articles he wished to buy, and was saying to the owner of the stall, "Just reflect a moment, Sir, how impossible it would be for me to take these excellent goods at the absurdly low price you are asking. If you will oblige me by doubling the amount, I shall do myself the honour of accepting them ; otherwise, I cannot but feel that you are unwilling to do business with me to-day."

"How very funny !" whispered T'ang to his friends. "Here, now, is quite a different custom from ours, where the buyer invariably tries to beat down the seller, and the seller to run up the price of his goods as high as possible. This certainly looks like the 'consideration for others' of which we spoke just now."

The man at the stall here replied, "Your wish, Sir, should be law to me, I know ; but the fact is, I am already overwhelmed with shame at the high price I have ventured to name. Besides, I do not profess to adhere rigidly to 'marked prices,'† which is a mere trick

\* A class very much dreaded by shopkeepers in China for their avarice and extortion. Usually called 'runners.'

† Almost every shop in China has some such sign as 'prix fixé,'

of the trade ; and consequently it should be the aim of every purchaser to make me lower my terms to the very smallest figure. You, on the contrary, are trying to raise the price to an exorbitant figure : and, although I fully appreciate your kindness in that respect, I must really ask you to seek what you require at some other establishment. It is quite impossible for me to execute your commands."

T'ang was again expressing his astonishment at this extraordinary reversal of the platitudes of trade, when the would-be purchaser replied, "For you, Sir, to ask such a low sum for these first-class goods, and then to turn round and accuse me of over-considering your interests, is indeed a sad breach of etiquette. Trade could not be carried on at all if all the advantages were on one side and the losses on the other ; neither am I more devoid of brains than the ordinary run of people that I should fail to understand this principle and let you catch me in a trap."

So they went on wrangling and jangling, the stall-keeper refusing to charge any more and the runner insisting on paying his own price, until the latter made a show of yielding and put down the full sum demanded on the counter, but took only half the amount of goods. Of course the stallkeeper would not consent to this, and they would both have fallen back upon their original positions had not two old gentlemen who happened to

but it is needless to say that Chinese tradesmen are quite as open to abate their demands as the more civilised denizens of the Rue Rivoli.

be passing stepped aside and arranged the matter for them, by deciding that the runner was to pay the full price but to receive only four-fifths of the goods.

T'ang and his companions walked on in silence, meditating upon the strange scene they had just witnessed; but they had not gone many steps when they came across a soldier\* similarly engaged in buying things at an open shop window. He was saying, "When I asked the price of these goods, you, Sir, begged me to take them at my own valuation; but now that I am willing to do so, you complain of the large sum I offer, whereas the truth is that it is actually very much below their real value. Do not treat me thus unfairly."

"It is not for me, Sir," replied the shopkeeper, "to demand a price for my own goods; my duty is to leave that entirely to you. But the fact is that these goods are old stock, and are not even the best of their kind; you would do much better at another shop. However, let us say halt what you are good enough to offer; even then I feel I shall be taking a great deal too much: I could not think, Sir, of parting with my goods at your price."

"What is that you are saying, Sir?" cried the soldier. "Although not in the trade myself, I can tell superior from inferior articles, and am not likely to mistake one

\* If possible a more deadly foe to Chinese tradesmen than the runners above mentioned. These ill-paid, and consequently brutal, vagabonds think nothing of snatching pastry or fruit from the costermongers' stalls as they walk along the streets. Hence the delicacy of our author's satire, which is necessarily somewhat lost upon European readers.

for the other. And to pay a low price for a good article is simply another way of taking money out of a man's pocket."

"Sir," retorted the shopkeeper, "if you are such a stickler for justice as all that, let us say half the price you first mentioned, and the goods are yours. If you object to that, I must ask you to take your custom elsewhere. You will then find that I am not imposing on you."

The soldier at first stuck to his text, but seeing that the shopkeeper was not inclined to give way, he laid down the sum named and began to take his goods, picking out the very worst he could find. Here, however, the shopkeeper interposed, saying, "Excuse me, Sir, but you are taking all the bad ones. It is doubtless very kind of you to leave the best for me; but if all men were like you, there would be a general collapse of trade."

"Sir," replied the soldier, "as you insist on accepting only half the value of the goods, there is no course open to me but to choose inferior articles. Besides, as a matter of fact, the best kind will not answer my purpose so well as the second or third best; and although I fully recognise your good intentions, I must really ask to be allowed to please myself."

"There is no objection, Sir," said the shopkeeper, "to your pleasing yourself; but low-class goods are sold at a low price, and do not command the same rates as superior articles."

Thus they went on bandying arguments for a long

time without coming to any definite agreement, until at last the soldier picked up the things he had chosen and tried to make off with them. The bystanders, however, all cried shame upon him and said he was a downright cheat, so that he was ultimately obliged to take some of the best kind and some of the inferior kind and put an end to the altercation.

A little farther on our travellers saw a countryman who had just paid the price of some purchases he had succeeded in making, and was hurrying away with them, when the shopkeeper called after him, "Sir! Sir! you have paid me by mistake in finer silver than we are accustomed to use here, and I have to allow you a considerable discount in consequence. Of course this is a mere trifle to a gentleman of your rank and position, but still for my own sake I must ask leave to make it all right with you."

"Pray don't mention such a small matter," replied the countryman, "but oblige me by putting the amount to my credit for use at a future date when I come again to buy some more of your excellent wares."

"No, no," answered the shopkeeper, "you don't catch old birds with chaff. That trick was played upon me last year by another gentleman, and to this day I have never set eyes upon him again, though I have made every endeavour to find out his whereabouts. As it is, I can now only look forward to repaying him in the next life; but if I let you take me in in the same way, why, when the next life comes and I am changed, may be into a horse or a donkey, I shall have quite enough to

do to find him, and your debt will go dragging on till the life after that.\* No, no, there is no time like the present; hereafter I might very likely forget what was the exact sum I owed you."

They continued to argue the point until the countryman consented to accept a trifle as a set-off against the fineness of his silver and went away with his goods, the shopkeeper bawling after him as long as he was in sight that he had sold him inferior articles at a high rate, and was positively defrauding him of his money. The countryman, however, got clear away, and the shopkeeper returned to his grumbling at the iniquity of the age. Just then a beggar happened to pass, and so in anger at having been compelled to take more than his due he handed him the difference. "Who knows," said he, "but that the present misery of this poor fellow may be retribution for overcharging people in a former life?"

"Ah," said T'ang, when he had witnessed the finale of this little drama, "truly this is the behaviour of gentlemen!"

Our travellers then fell into conversation with two respectable-looking old men who said they were brothers, and accepted their invitation to go and take a cup of tea together. Their hosts talked eagerly about China, and wished to hear many particulars of 'the first nation in the world.' Yet, while expressing their admiration for the high literary culture of its inhabitants and their unqualified successes in the arts and sciences, they did

\* Alluding to the Buddhist system of metempsychosis.



not hesitate to stigmatise as unworthy a great people certain usages which appeared to them deserving of the utmost censure. They laughed at the superstitions of Fêng-Shui\* and wondered how intelligent men could be imposed upon year after year by the mountebank professors of such baseless nonsense. "If it is true," said one of them, "that the selection of an auspicious day and a fitting spot for the burial of one's father or mother is certain to bring prosperity to the survivors, how can you account for the fact that the geomancers themselves are always a low, poverty-stricken lot? Surely they would begin by appropriating the very best positions themselves, and so secure whatever good fortune might happen to be in want of an owner."

Then again with regard to bandaging women's feet in order to reduce their size. "We can see no beauty," said they, "in such monstrosities as the feet of your ladies. Small noses are usually considered more attractive than large ones; but what would be said of a man who sliced a piece off his own nose in order to reduce it within proper limits?"

And thus the hours slipped pleasantly away until it was time to bid adieu to their new friends and regain their ship. Then a voyage of a few days brought them to the Country of Great Men, where they would hardly have landed but for T'ang's curiosity to see a people

\* The celebrated wind-and-water system of geomancy, which after having long been a serious obstacle to the introduction of telegraphs and railways, has in the last few years been shaken to its centre, and is now destined very shortly to collapse.

who he had heard used clouds as a means of locomotion. The omniscient To explained that the city lay at some distance from the shore behind a range of hills, and that it would be absolutely necessary to get as far as that if they wanted to see anything of the manners and customs of the people. So they set off to walk, meeting on the way a few people moving about on clouds of different colours about half-a-foot from the ground, but they soon lost themselves in a perfect labyrinth of paths and did not know which way to turn. Luckily, they spied out a small temple hidden in a grove of waving bamboos, and were on the point of knocking for admittance, when out came an old man of ordinary appearance, riding on a cloud, with a stoup of wine in one hand and a lump of pork in the other.\* On seeing the strangers he turned back and put down the pork and wine, returning at once with a smile on his face to welcome them to his 'rush hut.'† T'ang made him a low bow and inquired what might be the name of the temple. He replied that it was sacred to the Goddess of Mercy, and that he was the officiating priest. The

\* Evidencing a gross breach of the rule pasted at the door of every Buddhist temple—

No wine or meat shall enter here !

† Chinese conversational etiquette demands the use of the most outrageous terms. One dirty old Chinaman will ask another what is his 'honourable name,' the age of his 'venerable teeth,' the whereabouts of his 'palace' or 'noble mansion,' and the number of 'illustrious young gentlemen' who call him father. The humility of tone adopted in the reply is generally in direct ratio to the flattering language of the question.

trader Lin opened his eyes at this, and said, "But, my venerable Sir, how comes it then that you do not shave your head? And may we presume that there is a lady inside for whom you were about to prepare the pork and wine we saw just now?"

"There is, indeed, a lady within," replied the priest; "but she is merely the insignificant wife of your humble slave. She and I have lived here ever since we were children, burning incense and candles daily before the shrine. For our countrymen, hearing that China during the Han dynasty had accepted the Law of Buddha, and that priests and nuns with shaven heads had become quite common there, determined to adopt the same religion—dispensing however with the usual monastic vows."

The old priest then asked them whence they came, and on learning that they had just arrived from China became anxious to show them some hospitality; but T'ang prayed him to excuse them, urging that they wished to hurry on to the city. He then added, "May I ask what is the explanation of the clouds I see underneath the feet of the inhabitants of this country? Are you born with them?"

"Sir," answered the old priest, "these clouds are perfectly independent of the will of the individuals to whom they are attached. Their colour varies, and also changes, with the disposition of each particular person. The best clouds to have are striped like a rainbow; yellow is the second best, and black is the worst of all." T'ang then begged him to point out the way to the city,

which he did, and our travellers forthwith proceeded on their way thither. At length they arrived, but found nothing very different from what they had previously seen in the Country of Gentlemen, except that all the inhabitants were moving about on clouds of various hues, green, red, yellow, blue, and black. Amongst others they noticed a filthy beggar riding on a striped or rainbow cloud; whereupon T'ang remarked, "Why, the priest told us that the striped cloud was the best of all, and here is a dirty old beggar with one!" /

"Don't you recollect," said Lin, "that the wine-bibbing, meat-eating, wife-marrying ascetic had a striped cloud himself? You may be pretty sure that neither of them are men of very distinguished virtue."

"When I was here before," explained To, "I heard that the colour of a man's cloud was quite independent of his wishes, being regulated entirely by his natural disposition and actions, so that virtuous people show good colours and wicked people bad ones whether they like or not; and that nothing short of change of disposition and conduct can possibly alter the hue of any man's cloud. Thus it happens that persons of high rank are sometimes seen on black clouds, while their poorer and humbler neighbours ride about on clouds of the very best colours. As it is, I would have you notice how few—scarcely two in a hundred—are seen on black clouds. For such are held in universal detestation by their fellow-countrymen, who avoid contact with them as much as they can; whereas, on the other hand, nothing gives more pleasure to the

inhabitants of this region than the sight of a kindly and benevolent act. Neither are they always striving to get the better of one another, and therefore the people of the adjacent nations have named this the Country of Great Men; not meaning thereby that physically speaking they are greater than the usual run of human beings, but that they are a high-minded and virtuous race."

"Dear me!" cried T'ang, "I now see what a delusion I have always been labouring under. Formerly, whenever I heard any one talking about the Country of Great Men, which they placed at an immense distance beyond the sea, I have always pictured to myself a land inhabited by monstrous creatures with bodies some ten or twenty feet in height."

"And such a nation really does exist," interposed To, "the people of which are actually of the height you mention; but when we get there, as in course of time we shall, you will find out that there is a vast difference between the country of *great* men and the country of *long* men."

While they were thus talking, the people in the streets began to fall back to either side, leaving a clear passage in the middle; and by-and-by they saw an official pass in great state, with his red umbrella, gongs, tablets, and other instrumental parts of his dignity, besides hosts of attendants on clouds of various hues. They noticed, however, that his own cloud was scrupulously concealed by a valance of red silk so that its colour could not possibly be seen; whereupon T'ang observed, "Of course

the high officials of this country have no need for horses or sedan-chairs, provided as they are with these convenient clouds upon which they can move about at their pleasure; but I should like to know why this gentleman keeps his cloud covered up in such a mysterious manner."

"Well," replied To, "the fact is that he, like too many others of his class, has a cloud of a peculiar colour. It is not exactly black, but more of an ashen hue, showing thereby that his hands are not nearly so clean as they ought to be. For although he puts on all the appearance of a virtuous member of society and conceals his misdeeds from the world at large, yet he cannot control his cloud which takes its hue from the real working of his inmost mind. Consequently, he covers it up; but he might as well 'stuff his ears' and 'ring a bell' for all the good that can do him. Other people will hear the bell if he doesn't. Nothing on earth will change the colour of that cloud of his except a conscientious repentance and a thorough reformation of character. Besides, there is every danger of the truth becoming bruited abroad, and then he is a lost man. Not only would he be severely punished by the king of the country, but he would further be shunned on all sides as a degraded and dishonourable man."

"Just Heaven!" cried the trader Lin, "how inscrutable are thy ways to man."

"Why say you so?" asked T'ang of his uncle, "and to what may you be particularly alluding?"

"I say so," replied Lin, "inasmuch as I see these

clouds confined to this nation. How useful it would be in our own country to have some such infallible means of distinguishing the good from the bad. For if every wicked man carried about, so to speak, his own shop-sign with him wherever he went, surely this would act as a powerful deterrent from crime."

"My dear friend," said the aged To, "though the wicked in our part of the world carry about with them no tell-tale cloud, there is nevertheless a blackness in their looks by which you may know the colour of their hearts."

"That may be so," answered Lin, "but I for one am unable to perceive whether the blackness is there or not."

"*You* may not detect it," retorted To, "but Heaven does, and deals out its rewards and punishments accordingly."

"Sir," said Lin, "I will take your word for it;" and there the discussion ended.

The sun was now sinking rapidly in the west, and our travellers had no alternative but to make the best of their way back to the ship, which they reached in safety before night, and hoisting sail bade adieu to the Country of Great Men. Their ocean trip was hardly yet begun, so many various nations did they visit before setting foot once again upon the soil of their fatherland. They saw the Pygmies, averaging about one foot in height, with their funny little four-inch children; and recorded the fact that these tiny people were obliged to go about in small bands of three or five, for fear of large birds which

were in the habit of carrying them off. They reached the Country of Long Men, which T'ang had previously confounded with the Country of Great Men, and beheld the inhabitants on the sea-shore reaching down into the water for fish with arms some fifteen cubits in length. They saw the people of the Winged Nation flying about over their heads, the Double-Faced Nation, and many other strange beings. But the lessening hull of their fish-like junk,\* built, as is everything else in China, upon unchanging lines, warns us that the reader's attention may be lessening too. We shall therefore follow them no farther upon their adventurous voyage, but wish them 'good wind, good water,' a prosperous journey and a safe return.

\* Home readers may not be aware that nearly every junk and even small boat in China is provided with a pair of huge eyes nailed one on each side of the bow. "For how," argue the Chinamen, "could they otherwise see which way to go?" And European captains, engaged in the carrying trade on the coast and dependent upon the Chinese for their freights, have in many instances sought to humour their patrons by adopting the same harmless custom in regard to the steamers under their command.



## IV.—THE SUNGS.

A.D. 960–1280.

THE first portion of the Sung dynasty may be considered as on the whole one of the most prosperous and peaceable periods of the history of China. The nation had already in a great measure settled down to that state of material civilisation and mental culture in which it may be said to have been discovered by Europeans a few centuries later. To the appliances of Chinese ordinary life it is probable that but few additions had been made even since a much earlier date. The national costume has indeed undergone subsequent variations, and at least one striking change has been introduced in later years, *i.e.*, the tail, which will be mentioned in its proper place. But the ploughs and hoes, the water-wheels and well-sweeps, the tools of artisans, mud huts, junks, carts, chairs, tables, chopsticks, etc., etc., which we still see in China, are doubtless approximately those of more than 2,000 years ago. Mencius observed that the written language was the same, and axle-trees of the same length, all over the empire; and to this day an unaltering uniformity is one of the chief characteristics of the Chinese people in every department of life.

The House of Sung was not, however, without the

usual troubles for any length of time. Periodicity of revolt is a special feature of Chinese history; and the Sung were hardly exempt from this in a greater degree than other dynasties. The Tartars, too, were for ever encroaching upon Chinese territory, and finally overran and occupied a large part of northern China. This resulted in an amicable arrangement to divide the empire, the Tartars retaining their conquests in the north. Less than a hundred years later came the invasion of the Mongols, under Genghiz Khan, with the long struggle which eventuated in the complete overthrow of both the Tartars and the Sung and the final establishment of the Mongol dynasty under Kublai Khan, whose success was in a great measure due to the military capacity of his famous lieutenant, Bayan. From this struggle one name in particular has survived to form a landmark of which the Chinese are justly proud. It is that of the patriot statesman, Wên T'ien-hsiang, whose fidelity to the Sung no defeats could shake, no promises undermine; and who perished miserably in the hands of the enemy, rather than abjure the loyalty which had been the pride and almost the object of his existence.

Another name inseparably connected with the history of the Sung is that of Wang An-shih, who has been styled 'the innovator' from the gigantic administrative changes, or innovations, he laboured ineffectually to introduce. The chief of these were (1) a universal system of militia, under which the whole body of citizens were liable to military drill and to be called out for service in time of need: and (2) a system of State loans

to agriculturists, in order to supply capital for more extensive and more remunerative farming operations. His schemes were ultimately set aside, through the opposition of a statesman, the mention of whose name carries us away from politics to the serener atmosphere of literary labour. Ssü-ma Kuang spent nineteen years of his life in the compilation of *The Mirror of History*, a history of China, in 294 books, from the earliest times of the Chow dynasty down to the accession of the house of Sung. A century later, this lengthy and somewhat unmanageable production was recast in a greatly condensed form, under the superintendence of Chu Hsi (*or* Choo Hi), the latter work at once taking rank as the standard history of China to that date. Chu Hsi himself played in other ways by far the most important part among all the literary giants of the Sung. Besides holding, during a large portion of his life, high official positions with an almost unqualified success, his writings are more extensive and more varied in character than those of any other Chinese author; and the complete collection of his great philosophical works, published in 1713, fills no fewer than sixty-six books. He introduced interpretations of the Confucian classics, either wholly or partially at variance with those which had been put forth by the scholars of the Han dynasty and received as infallible ever since, thus modifying to a certain extent the prevailing standard of political and social morality. His principle was simply one of consistency. He refused to interpret certain words in a given passage in one sense, and the same words, occurring elsewhere, in another

sense. And this principle recommended itself at once to the highly-logical mind of the Chinese. Chu Hsi's commentaries were received to the exclusion of all others, and still form the only authorised interpretation of the classical books, upon a knowledge of which all success at the great competitive examinations may be said to entirely depend.

It would be a lengthy task to merely enumerate the names in the great phalanx of writers who flourished under the Sungs, and who formed an Augustan age of Chinese literature. Exception must, however, be made in favour of (1) Ou-yang Hsiu, who, besides being an eminent statesman, was a voluminous historian of the immediately preceding dynasties, an essayist of rare ability, and a poet; and (2) of Su Tung-p'o, whose name, next to that of Chu Hsi, fills the largest place in Chinese memorials of this period. A vigorous opponent of the 'Innovator,' he suffered banishment for his opposition; and, again, after his rival's fall, he was similarly punished for further crossing the Imperial will. His exile was shared by the beautiful and accomplished girl, 'Morning Clouds,' to whose inspiration we owe many of the elaborate poems and other productions in the composition of which the banished poet beguiled his time; and whose untimely death, of consumption, on the banks of their favourite lake, hastened the poet's end, which occurred shortly after his recall from banishment.

Buddhism and Taoism had by this time made advances towards tacit terms of mutual toleration. They wisely agreed to share rather than to quarrel over the

carcass which lay at their feet; and from that date they have flourished together without prejudice. The ministers of each religion, now so mixed up that a casual observer could hardly distinguish one from the other, meet upon equal terms and often take parts in the same ceremony, Chinese of the wealthier classes considering it advisable to patronise both establishments. Both were, and still nominally remain, under the ban of Confucianism; but Confucianism is cold food for the uneducated classes, and affords poor solace to the grosser cravings of the masses who have never learnt to think. That Buddhism continued to receive Imperial patronage under the Sung is a fact confirmed by the recent discovery at Buddha-Gaya of certain Chinese inscriptions, the following translation of one of which was made from a photograph taken by Mr. Garrick, Assistant Archæological Surveyor to the Government of India:—

“This pagoda was erected by the Emperor and Empress of the Great Sung dynasty, in memory of His Imperial Majesty, T'ai Tsung.

“By command of His Imperial Majesty, our divinely-enlightened, most glorious, most virtuous, most filial sovereign of this the Great Sung dynasty, and of Her Imperial Majesty, our most gracious, most virtuous, and most compassionate Empress, I, the Buddhist priest Hui-wên, have been humbly commissioned to proceed to the country of Magadha, and to erect, on behalf of His departed Imperial Majesty, T'ai Tsung,—the humane, the orthodox, the deserving, the divinely-

virtuous, the wise, the supremely-filial—a pagoda beside the Bôdhimanda, the Diamond Throne. For His Imperial Majesty, T'ai Tsung, was humbly desirous of passing aloft to the Dêvalôka, the Mansions of the Blest, there to receive the word from Buddha himself, to witness the ranks of the Immortal Saints, and be enrolled for ever among the ranks of the faithful; hoping thus to secure to the House of Sung divine protection through all generations.

“Recorded this 19th day of the first moon of the second year of Ming Tao (A.D. 1033.)”

‘Magadha’ was the name of the ancient kingdom in which the temple of Buddha-Gaya was situated. It is said to have been the head-quarters of Buddhism down to A.D. 400, if not later. The ‘Bôdhimanda’ is the terrace surrounding the Bôdhi tree, or tree of knowledge, and is said to have risen spontaneously out of the ground of a consistency as hard as diamond.

Meanwhile, the system of competitive examinations and literary degrees had been still more fully elaborated, and the famous child’s primer, the Three-Character-Classic, which is even now the first stepping-stone to knowledge, had been placed in the hands of schoolboys. The surnames of the people were collected together to the number of 438 in all; and although the list was admittedly not complete, the great majority of those names which were omitted, once perhaps in common use, have altogether disappeared. It is comparatively rare now-a-days to meet with a person whose family name is not to be found within the limits of this small

collection. Administration of justice is said to have flourished under the incorrupt officials of this dynasty; and the acumen of Judge Pao, of the 'Dragon Face,' is still a household word.\* The functions of magistrates acting in their capacity as coroners were now more fully defined; while the study of medical jurisprudence was stimulated by the publication of a volume which, although combining the maximum of superstition with the minimum of scientific research, is still the officially-recognised text-book on all subjects connected with murder, suicide, and accidental death. Medicine and the art of healing generally came in for a considerable share of attention at the hands of the Sung, and many voluminous works on therapeutics have come down to us wholly or in part from this period. Inoculation for small-pox has been known to the Chinese at least since the early years of this dynasty, if not earlier. It was also under the Sung that the first work on acupuncture was published. It is attributed to the court physician of the day, who, by command of the Emperor, constructed two brass figures of a man and woman, in order the better to illustrate the principles of his art.

The irruption of the Mongols under Genghiz Khan, and the comparatively short dynasty which was later on actually established under Kublai Khan, may for several reasons be regarded as a period of transition from the epoch of the Sung to the epoch of the Mings. For the first eighty years after the nominal accession of Genghis Khan, the empire was more or less in a state of siege

\* For a specimen case, *see* p. 92.

and martial law from one end to the other; and then, in less than one hundred years afterwards, the Mongol dynasty had passed away. The story of Ser Marco Polo and his wonderful travels, familiar to most readers, gives us a valuable insight into this period of brilliant courts, thronged marts, fine cities, and great national wealth; to which may be added the corroborative account given by Ibn Batuta, the Arab traveller, who visited China towards the end of the first half of the fourteenth century.

At this date, the literary glory of the Sung had hardly begun to grow dim. Ma Tuan-lin carried on his voluminous work through all these troublous times of change, and at his death bequeathed to the world the *Antiquarian Researches* in 348 books, which has made his name famous to every student of Chinese literature. Plane and spherical trigonometry were both known to the Chinese by this time, and mathematics generally began to receive a larger share of the attention of scholars. It was also under the Mongol dynasty that the novel first made its appearance,—a fact pointing to a definite social advancement, if only in the direction of luxurious reading. Three out of the *Four Wonderful Books*, as four leading Chinese novels are collectively styled, belong to this period; one of these being the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, from which an extract has already been given; and another, an apocryphal account of the travels of Hsüan Tsang, the Buddhist priest, to India and back, six centuries before, in quest of books and information relating to the new religion of Buddha.



Among other points may be mentioned a great influx of Mahommedans, and consequent spread of their religion, about this time. It is also to this period that we must refer an extensive migration of natives from the northern to the southern portions of China, the descendants of the migrating families being recognisable in the modern Hakkas, a strange people who live among, yet in some senses apart from, the ordinary Chinese of the south, possessing a dialect and many social characteristics of their own. As has been already stated, they do not cramp their women's feet. They are more thrifty and more industrious, as well as a more hardy race, even than the Chinese; and many of the prizes in the lotteries of literary competition fall from time to time to their share.

The Grand Canal was completed, if not actually designed, by Kublai Khan; and thus Cambaluc, the Peking of those days, was united by inland water communication with the extreme south of China. The work seems to have been begun by the Emperor Yang Ti, seven centuries previously, and one of its primary objects, the conveyance of grain to the capital, has now ceased to exist as such; but even thus, the balance, a great and at that time useful undertaking, remains in favour of Kublai Khan.

Hardly so successful was the same Emperor's huge naval expedition against Japan, which, in point of number of ships and men, the insular character of the enemy's country, the chastisement intended, and the total loss of the fleet in a storm, aided by the stubborn resistance

of the Japanese themselves—suggests a very obvious comparison with the object and fate of the Spanish Armada.

The age of the Sungs carries us from a hundred years previous to the Norman Conquest down to about the death of Edward III. It was the epoch of Venetian commerce and maritime supremacy; and of the first great lights in Italian literature—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. English, French, German, and Spanish literature had yet to develop, only one or two of the earlier writers, such as Chaucer, having as yet appeared on the scene.

## THE OLD DRUNKARD'S ARBOUR.

[This light sketch is from the pen of the historian, Ou-yang Hsiu, and tells its own tale.]

The district of Ch'u is entirely surrounded by hills, and the peaks to the south-west are clothed with a dense and beautiful growth of trees over which the eye wanders in rapture away to the confines of Shantung. A walk of two or three miles on those hills brings one within earshot of the sound of falling water which gushes forth from a ravine, and is known as the Wine-fountain; while hard by in a nook at a bend in the road stands a kiosk, commonly spoken of as the Old Drunkard's Arbour. It was built by a Buddhist priest, called Deathless Wisdom, who lived among these hills, and received the above name from the Governor himself. For the latter used to bring his friends hither to take wine; and as he personally was incapacitated by a very few cups, and was besides a man well on in years, he gave himself the sobriquet of the Old Drunkard. But it was not wine that attracted him to this spot; it was the charming scenery which wine enabled him to enjoy. The sun's rays, peeping at dawn through the trees, and by-and-by obscured behind gathering clouds, leaving naught but gloom around, give to this spot the alternations of morning and night. The wild flowers that exhale their perfume from the darkness of some shady dell; the luxuriant foliage of the dense forest of beautiful trees; the clear frosty wind; and the naked boulders of

the lessening torrent—these are the indications of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The morning is the time to go thither, returning with the shades of night; and although the place presents a different aspect with the changes of the season, its charms are subject to no interruption, but continue always. Burden-carriers sing their way along the road, and travellers rest a while under the trees; shouts from one, responses from another; old people hobbling onwards with baskets or packages in their hands; backwards and forwards all day long without a break;—these are the people of Ch'u. A cast in the stream, and a fine fish taken from some spot where the eddying pools begin to deepen; a draught of cool wine from the fountain; and a few such dishes of meats and fruits as the hills are able to provide;—these, nicely laid out beforehand, constitute the Governor's feast. And in the revelry of the banquet hour there is no thought of toil or trouble; every archer hits his mark, and every player wins his *partie*; goblets flash from hand to hand, and a buzz of conversation is heard as the guests move unconstrainedly about. Among them is an old man with white hair, bald at the top of his head. This is the drunken Governor, who, when the evening sun kisses the tips of the hills, and the falling shadows are drawn out and blurred, bends his steps homewards in company with his friends. Then in the growing darkness are heard sounds above and below: the beasts of the field and the birds of the air are rejoicing at the departure of man. They, too, can rejoice in hills and trees, but they cannot rejoice as man

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rejoices. So also the Governor's friends ; they rejoice with him, though they do not understand at what it is that he rejoices. Drunk, he can rejoice with them ; sober, he can discourse with them ; such is the Governor. And should you ask who is this Governor, I reply, 'Ou-yang Hsiu of Lu-ling.'

## THE INTERCESSION OF AMIDA BUDDHA.

[Translated from the published collection of Judge Pao's Criminal Cases.]

There lived, at a certain place in the province of Hupei, a graduate named Hsü Yen-chung, just eighteen years of age, and a handsome, clever-looking fellow. In the house opposite resided a pork-butcher, and he had a pretty daughter named Shu-nü, about seventeen, who spent a great deal of her time embroidering at an upper window which overlooked the street. One day she noticed Hsü passing by, and the two young people at once fell in love with each other. As time went on they began to laugh and talk together, and one evening Hsü, with the young lady's consent, planted a ladder against the wall, and got up into her room. Shu-nü then told him that for the future she had arranged a method by which he might climb up and down with less risk of detection, explaining that every night a piece of cloth stretched over a roller would be found hanging out of window, and that if he took hold of the end below, she would pull him up. Hsü was delighted with this plan, which they carried on for some six months, quite unsuspected by the pork-butcher, though not altogether so by the neighbours. At length, it chanced that one evening when Hsü had gone to a wine-party, and did not visit Shu-nü as usual, a Buddhist priest who was calling for alms along the street saw the cloth hanging out of window,

and thinking that it had been hung out to dry and had been forgotten by the family, he determined to walk off with it. With this view, he stopped beating his wooden fish,\* and crossing quietly over, seized the cloth; upon which he immediately felt himself being raised in the air by some one above. Suspecting what this meant, he allowed himself to be pulled up until he stood in the presence of Shu-nü. No sooner had the latter found out who he was, than without waiting to listen to his protestations, she bade the dirty bald-pate† be gone, offering him a hair-pin as a bribe to expedite his movements. The priest, however, declared that she had pulled him up, and that in consequence he intended to stay; at which Shu-nü began to call out "Thieves!" at the top of her voice. The pork-butcher and his wife were then fast asleep; but the priest, fearing lest he should be discovered, drew a knife and killed the girl on the spot, escaping from the room so soon as he had possessed himself of her hair-pins, finger-rings, and other ornaments.

On the following day, as Shu-nü did not appear at breakfast, her mother went to see what was the matter, and found her lying murdered on the floor. Nor had the parents the least suspicion on the subject until one of their neighbours, who was on bad terms with Hsü, mentioned to the pork-hutcher that his daughter had been acquainted with Hsü for six months past, and

\* A hollow instrument made in that shape, because a fish sleeps with its eyes open, and is therefore a good emblem of vigilance.

† Buddhist priests shave the entire head.

hinted that as Hsü had been to a wine-party on that very evening, he might have committed the murder in a fit of drunkenness. The pork-butcher accordingly proceeded to file a charge before Judge Pao, of whose great judicial capacity he was well aware, in these terms:—

“In a matter of violence resulting in murder. Whereas a certain evil-disposed graduate, named Hsü Yen-chung, has been striving by numerous artifices to carry out iniquitous designs upon your petitioner’s daughter, and last night went so far as to enter her room in a state of intoxication and stab her to death with a knife, subsequently making off with her head-ornaments, etc., in proof of which the neighbours can be called to bear witness; and whereas such behaviour is highly discreditable to the position he occupies, amounting in fact to making as light of the laws and statutes as of a goose’s feather, and to dragging the great social relationships and observances in the dust. Therefore, your petitioner hastens to file this charge, praying that the murderer may be decreed to pay the penalty with his life.”\*

The above document having been admitted by Judge Pao, runners were forthwith despatched to arrest prosecutor, accused, and witnesses; and when these were duly assembled, the proceedings were opened by an examination of the pork-butcher’s neighbours, who deposed that the deceased had to their knowledge been

\* A fair specimen of an ordinary Chinese ‘petition’ in a criminal case.



carrying on an intrigue with Hsü Yen-chung for the past six months, the same being quite unknown to her parents, and that unless it was through this that she met her death, they could not say how it was, the affair having happened in the dead of night. At this, Hsü interposed, and said, "In the face of such general testimony, I have no intention of denying the intrigue, which I fully admit, and for which I am prepared to suffer punishment; but I totally deny having taken any part in the murder." "Your Honour," cried the pork-butcher, "he is admitting the lesser only to escape the greater crime. As no one else ever went into my daughter's room, it follows that he must have killed her, possibly because she may have tried to forbid his visits. And now, the reckless young fellow has no more thought for the poor girl, so that unless your Honour deals severely with him, he will never acknowledge his guilt." The judge looked at Hsü, and noticing by his handsome face and quiet manner that he did not look at all like a murderer, proceeded to ask him if during the time that he had been acquainted with the deceased he had seen any other persons passing along the street at night. "Not until this month," replied Hsü, "when a begging priest used to go by sometimes, beating his wooden fish." At this, Judge Pao reflected a moment, and then, flying into a great rage, cried out, "It was you who killed her, and you will have to die for it! Do you admit the justice of this sentence?" Hsü Yen-chung, being only a young man, was frightened out of his life, and immediately admitted that his sentence was just; upon which

he received twenty blows and was committed to prison, after formally signing his confession of guilt.\*

Judge Pao now summoned two of his runners, and having elicited from them certain details as to the priest mentioned by Hsü, gave them instructions how to act, promising to reward them well in case of a successful result. So it happened that the same night, as the priest, after going his rounds, was returning to the temple in which he lived, near a bridge, he heard from beneath the bridge the noise of three devils, one of which was crying out, 'Up!' and another 'Down!' while the third was sobbing in a low and piteous tone. The priest, in a great fright, sat down on the bridge, and began to repeat the name of Amida Buddha, when one of the devils, speaking in a woman's voice broken by sobs, called out, "Oh, Ming-hsiu, Ming-hsiu,† why did you cut me off before my time, and steal my hair-pins and head-ornaments? I have laid the case before the Judge of the Infernal Regions, who has sent two devils with me to get your life, and here are you praying to Amida Buddha to intercede in your behalf! Rather get some money and silk for me, and make a present to these devils, if you want to hush the matter up privately. Otherwise, if I appeal to God‡ again, your life will certainly be forfeited, and not all the Buddhas in creation will be able to save you." At this the priest grasped his rosary,

\* Without which no criminal 'record' of the kind is complete, and, theoretically, no criminal can be executed.

† The priest's religious designation.

‡ The Supreme Being of the ancient Chinese, who is often, as here, mixed up with Buddhist and other deities.

and, joining his hands in an attitude of prayer, replied, "I could not help it; I was afraid some one would come and catch me, and so, without thinking, I took your life. I still have your ornaments, and to-morrow I will sell them and buy for you paper-money and silk; besides which, I will read masses for your soul and get you safe through purgatory. Do not, I pray you, complain of me to God." Here the female devil burst out crying, and the two other devils began to roar out, mingling their groans with the voice of the priest, who was repeating a *sutra* and promising to say masses for Shu-nü's soul, when suddenly the two runners came out and clapped an iron chain over the priest's neck. The latter was terrified, thinking they were devils, but one of them told him they were only runners sent by Judge Pao to take him prisoner; whereupon he became quite beside himself with fear, and could only entreat them to spare him 'for the love of Buddha.' "A pretty specimen of a Buddha you are," replied the runners, as they tightened up his chain and led him away, one of them picking up his stole and praying-mat before they left the spot.

Now, all this plan of the devils under the bridge had been devised by the judge, who had told his two runners to take a girl with them to play the part of Shu-nü; and the next day the whole story was told in open court, whereupon a present of money was made to the girl and to the runners from the public funds, and the ornaments which had been recovered from the sleeve of the priest's robe were regularly identified by Shu-nü's

father. Ming-hsiu was now obliged to confess his guilt, and Judge Pao, turning to Hsü Yen-chung, addressed him as follows:—"The murderer of the deceased girl was this bald-headed scoundrel who now stands before us, and he will pay the penalty with his life. You, too, a graduate of the empire, deserve for your connection with this affair to be deprived of your graduate's gown. There is, however, a saving clause for you. On condition that you acknowledge the deceased Shu-nü as your lawful wife, and bury her, and worship at her tomb as such, promising never to marry any other woman, then I will forbear to unfrock you as I ought, and your career will still be open before you. Do you accept this condition?" "Your Honour," replied Hsü, "I readily accept the condition offered; the more so that before Shu-nü's death I had already promised to marry her as soon as I should have taken my second degree. I will therefore do all your Honour requires of me; as to my literary degree, and whether I am to retain it or not, that is for your Honour to decide." "Your heart," said Judge Pao, in conclusion, "beats, I am pleased to observe, in accordance with the eternal principles of Right. I shall make it my business to forward your prospects in life, and will communicate accordingly with the authorities of the Educational Department."

## V.—THE MINGS.

A.D. 1370-1650.

THE founder of the Ming dynasty rose from starvation and obscurity to occupy the throne of the Chinese Empire. In his youth he had sought refuge from the pangs of hunger in a Buddhist monastery; later on he became a soldier of fortune and joined the ranks of the insurgents who were endeavouring to shake off the alien yoke of the Mongols. His own great abilities carried him on. He speedily obtained the leadership of a large army, with which he totally destroyed the power of the Mongols and finally established a new Chinese dynasty over the thirteen provinces into which the empire was divided. He fixed his capital at Nanking, where it remained until the accession of the third Emperor, the conqueror of Cochin-China and Tonquin, who transferred the seat of government back to Peking, the capital of the Mongols, from which it has never since been removed.

For nearly three hundred years the Mings swayed the destinies of China. Their rule was not one of uninterrupted peace either within or without the empire; but it was on the whole a wise and popular rule, and the period which it covers is otherwise

notable for immense literary activity, and for considerable refinement in manners and material civilisation. The exquisite blue porcelain of this dynasty is now highly prized by collectors of old China, and compares most favourably with the heavier and coarser style which is attributed to the age of the Sung.

From without, the Mings were constantly harassed by the encroachments of the Tartars; from within, the ceaseless intriguing of the eunuchs (resulting in one case in the temporary deposition of an Emperor) was a fertile cause of trouble. Towards the close of the sixteenth century the Portuguese appeared upon the scene, and from their 'concession' at Macao, some time the residence of Camoens, opened commercial relations between China and the West. They brought the Chinese, among other things, opium, which had previously been imported overland from India. They possibly taught them how to make gunpowder, to the invention of which the Chinese do not seem, upon striking a balance of evidence, to possess an independent claim. About the same time Rome contributed the first instalment of those wonderful Jesuit fathers, whose names may truly be said to have filled the empire 'with sounds that echo still,' the memory of their scientific labours and the benefits they thus conferred upon China having long survived the wreck and discredit of the faith to which they devoted their lives. And at this distance of time it does not appear to be a wild statement to assert that had the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and the Dominicans, been able to resist quarrelling among themselves, and

had they rather united to persuade Papal infallibility to permit the incorporation of ancestor worship with the rites and ceremonies of the Romish church—China would at this moment be a Catholic country, and Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism would long since have receded into the past.

Of all these Jesuit missionaries, the name of Matteo Ricci stands by common consent first upon the long list. He spent many years in China. He associated with the highest personages in the land. He acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the book language, and has left behind him several valuable treatises of a metaphysical and theological character, written in such a polished style as to command the recognition and even the admiration of the Chinese. He particularly directed his attention to an attack upon Buddhism, the severity of which called forth numerous replies from the better educated of the priesthood, and evoked a controversy in which it is considered that Ricci had the best of his opponents. One of his most intimate friends and fellow-workers was the well-known scholar and statesman, Hsü Kuang-ch'i, the author of a voluminous compendium of agriculture, and joint-author of the large work which introduced European astronomy to the Chinese. He was appointed by the Emperor to co-operate with other Jesuit missionaries in reforming the national calendar, which had gradually reached a stage of hopeless inaccuracy. He wrote, independently, several small scientific works; also a diatribe against the Buddhist religion; and last but not least in significance, a defence

of the Jesuits, addressed to the Throne, when their influence at court had begun to excite envy and distrust. Hsü Kuang-ch'i forms the sole exception in the history of China of a scholar, and a man of means and position, on the side of Christianity.

Chief among the literary achievements belonging more strictly to native enterprise at this period, is the gigantic encyclopædia in over 22,000 books, only one copy of which, and that imperfect, has survived out of the four that were originally made. Allowing fifty octavo pages to a 'book,' the result would be a total of at least 1,100,000 pages, the index alone occupying no fewer than three thousand pages. This wonderful work is now probably rotting, if not already rotted beyond hope of preservation, in some damp corner of the Imperial palace at Peking.

Another important and more accessible production of the Mings was the so-called *Chinese Herbal*. This is a compilation from the writings of no fewer than eight hundred preceding writers on botany, mineralogy, entomology, etc., etc., illustrated and arranged under categories, the whole forming a voluminous but unscientific book of reference on the natural history of China.

Many other great works of high literary calibre might be here named to swell the list bequeathed by the dynasty of the Mings. It must suffice however to state that shortly after the accession of the third Emperor, Yung Lo, the Imperial library was estimated to contain works, written and printed, amounting to a total of



about 1,000,000 'books' in all. A 'book' is a variable quantity both as regards number and size of pages; the number of books to a work also vary from one to several hundred. But a fair average value of a 'book' would be a demy 8vo. volume of 50 pages; and reckoning twenty or twenty-five 'books' to a work, it will be seen that the collection in question was not an unworthy private library for any Emperor in the early years of the fifteenth century.

The overthrow of the Mings was brought about by a combination of events, of the utmost importance to those who would understand the present position of the Tartars as rulers of China. A sudden rebellion had resulted in the capture of Peking by the insurgents, and in the suicide of the Emperor who was fated to be the last of his line. The Imperial Commander-in-chief, Wu San-kuei, at that time away on the frontiers of Manchuria, engaged in resisting the incursions of the Manchu Tartars, now for a long time in a state of ferment, immediately hurried back to the capital, but was totally defeated by the insurgent leader, and once more made his way, this time as a fugitive and a suppliant, towards the Tartar camp. Here he obtained promises of assistance, chiefly on condition that he would shave his head and grow a tail in accordance with Manchu custom,\* and again set off with his new

\* It is not quite clear from Mr. Herbert Spencer's "shaving the head and braiding the hair in a long queue, as a sign of subjection" (ch. on *Mutilation in Ceremonial Institutions*) that the mutilation in question was enforced principally to assimilate the national costume of the vanquished with that of the victors. See p. 111.

auxiliaries towards Peking, being reinforced on the way by a body of Mongol volunteers. As things turned out, Wu San-kuei arrived at Peking in advance of these allies, and actually succeeded, with the remnant of his own scattered forces, in routing the troops of the rebel leader before the Tartars and the Mongols came up. He then started in pursuit of the flying foe.

Meanwhile, the Tartar contingent arrived; and on entering the capital, the young Manchu prince in command was invited by the people of Peking to ascend the vacant throne. So that by the time Wu San-kuei re-appeared, he found a new dynasty already established, and his late Manchu ally at the head of affairs. His first intention had doubtless been to continue the Ming line of Emperors; but he seems to have readily fallen in with the arrangement already made, and to have tendered his formal allegiance on the four following conditions:—

(1). That no Chinese woman should be taken into the Imperial seraglio.

(2). That the first place at the great triennial examination for the highest literary degrees should never be given to a Tartar.\*

(3). That the people should adopt the national costume of the Tartars in their every-day life; but that they should be allowed to bury their corpses in the dress of the late dynasty.

\* This rule was broken in the case of the late Emperor's father-in-law; and although it was expressly stated that such exception was not to serve as a precedent, considerable discontent prevailed.

(4). That this condition of costume should not apply to the women of China, who were not to be compelled either to wear the hair in a tail before marriage (as the Tartar girls do) or to abandon the custom of compressing their feet.

The great Ming dynasty was now at an end, though not destined wholly to pass away. A large part of it may be said to remain in the literary monuments which were executed during its three centuries of existence. The dress of the period survives upon the modern Chinese stage ; and when occasionally the present alien yoke is found to gall, seditious whispers of 'restoration' are not altogether unheard. Secret societies have always been dreaded and prohibited by the government ; and of these none more so than the famous 'Triad Society,' in which Heaven, Earth, and Man are supposed to be associated in close alliance, and whose watchword is believed to embody some secret allusion to the downfall of the present dynasty.

In other parts of the world eventful times had set in. At home, we are brought from the accession of Richard II. down to the struggle between the King and Commons and the ultimate establishment of the Commonwealth. We have Henry IV. in France and Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain. In England, Shakespeare and Bacon ; in France, Rabelais and Descartes ; in Germany, Luther and Copernicus ; in Spain, Cervantes ; and in Italy, Galileo, Machiavelli, and Tasso ;—these names, to which should be added those of the great explorers, Columbus and Vasco de Gama, serve to remind one of what was meanwhile passing in the West.

## THE REV. MR. GOLD.\*

The Rev. Mr. Gold was a native of Chu-ch'êng. His father, being an unprincipled man, sold him for a few hundred cash to the monks of the Five-Hill Monastery; but, as the boy was a dull fellow and showed no aptitude for the avocations of a priest, he was set to keep pigs and take them to market as if he had been a menial servant. By-and-by, the old teacher among whose disciples he had been enrolled, died, leaving him some small property; whereupon he packed up his traps and left the monastery with a view of entering business as a huckster, in which trade he cheated so successfully by all kinds of tricks that before long he became quite a rich man. He then purchased broad lands and houses, and surrounded himself with a vast number of disciples. More than a thousand fingers fed daily at his table; and around them lay many hundred acres of fertile land, all under the control of Mr. Gold. The neighbouring houses were occupied by priests, including only the poor labourers who, with their wives and families, were employed to till the ground. Altogether there were several hundred establishments, and each was so arranged that these poor people lived in rooms all round, while the priests inhabited the middle. At the entrances were handsome reception-rooms with

\* This surname was adopted in allusion to the general avarice of priests, and the story, translated from the collection of P'u Liu-hsien, is a satire upon the wealth and influence of Buddhist priests in China towards the close of the Ming dynasty.

elaborately-carved posts and beams, beautifully painted in green and gold, and the tables and screens in the great hall were polished as bright as mirrors. Behind were the sleeping apartments with crimson door-screens and embroidered curtains, from within which issued the delicious perfume of epidendrum or musk. The beds were of sandal-wood, exquisitely ornamented and inlaid, and were provided with brocaded quilts and mattresses a foot or more in thickness. On the walls hung pictures of lovely women and magnificent landscapes, all by noted artists, not leaving a square inch uncovered. At a summons from within, many tens of servants would respond from without like a clap of thunder; and, as for officials in tasselled caps and leathern boots, they would flock thither like birds, standing in the watchful and expectant attitude of wild geese. They would speak in an undertone, and incline their ears to listen; and on the arrival of guests, there would be a rich banquet of many courses of dainty food ready at a moment's notice. No singing-girls were, however, permitted within the precincts; but numbers of clever boys who could imitate women used to wrap their heads in black crape turbans and sing love ditties to the priests in a very captivating manner. And whenever Mr. Gold went out he was followed by a troop of horsemen armed with bows and arrows, and carrying banners and spears. His servants addressed him as 'Sir,' and the people of the neighbourhood as 'grandfather' or 'uncle,' no one venturing to use such titles as 'teacher' or 'parson,' etc., etc. His disciples did things on a somewhat smaller scale; but

even they had swift steeds and crowds of chariots, as though they had been the scions of the wealthiest houses. Mr. Gould further extended his communications far and wide, so that within a radius of several hundred miles not a breath escaped him. He was thus kept informed of all that went on, and people were very careful how they crossed his path. Otherwise, he was a coarse, illiterate fellow, without a spark of refinement in him. He never said a single mass, nor uttered a single prayer ; his feet never crossed the chapel threshold ; neither were cymbals or drums to be found in his private apartments, such things never having been seen or heard of by his followers. Among his tenants were a large number of women and girls, just as at an Imperial city, all of whom drew from the priests without stint what sums they required for rouge, cosmetics, and pin-money generally ; and thus, in that neighbourhood, there were some hundred persons who were agriculturists without fields to till. On one occasion a labourer killed a priest and buried him under his bed ; but there was no searching investigation of the affair : the man was simply expelled the community according to custom. Mr. Gold also bought a boy from a family with a different surname, and adopted him as his son, engaging a tutor to instruct him in literature. This youth turned out remarkably clever, and his name was entered on the list of students ; and, by-and-by, Mr. Gold purchased for him the B.A. degree and sent him up to the capital to compete for the second or master's degree. The young man succeeded, and Mr. Gold's reputation went up proportionately, and

those who 'Sirred' him before 'Your-Worshipped' him now, standing in respectful attitudes as they gathered round him at table.

Finally, when Mr. Gold departed this life, the master of arts, clad in the hempen mourning clothes of a son, lay on a straw-mat beside the coffin with his head on a lump of earth, as though, in the language of the north, he had been actually 'bereaved of his father.' The couch was literally covered with staves, and from behind the funeral-curtain there proceeded the wailing of a single woman, the adopted daughter-in-law of the deceased. All the great ladies who lived near came in their best clothes to offer their condolences, and the road was literally blocked up with official hats, red umbrellas, sedan-chairs, and horses. On the day of the interment long lines of sheds and marquees were erected, while flags and banners darkened the sun in the sky. Of offerings in paper of all kinds and colours, to be burnt and used by the deceased in the infernal regions, were numbers of chairs and umbrellas, hosts of horses and beautiful girls, devil-attendants dressed in black silk with tall hats that seemed to touch the sky, houses and buildings extending over many acres, so that people who got in among them frequently could not find their way out again, and numerous other things of a similar description, the very names of which it would be impossible to tell. Those mandarins who came with large retinues to the funeral entered in with bowed heads, and performed eight prostrations before the corpse; while persons of an inferior station merely knocked their heads

on the ground and departed, not daring to trouble either the dead man's son or his brother priests to make any response to their salutations. Lovely girls came to gaze upon the scene; husbands brought their wives, and mothers their children, in one long perspiring stream. In the midst of this seething crowd were all kinds of dramatic representations accompanied by the clash of cymbals and tambourines; and of this mighty mass of human beings nothing was to be seen but a moving sea of heads. Women were taken with the pains of labour and gave birth to children, while others stood round and screened them by holding out their skirts. The baby's cry would be heard, but no one had time to ask whether it was a boy or a girl. A piece of anything was taken to wrap the child in, and the mother was supported or dragged away—truly a marvellous spectacle indeed! When the funeral obsequies were over, the property left by Mr. Gold was divided into two portions, of which the son took one and the dead man's retainers took the other. The master of arts continued to live there with his half share, entirely surrounded on the north, south, east, and west, by gentlemen of the dark robe, whose interests were so inseparably bound up with his own that when one itched the other felt it.



## VI.—THE CH'INGS.

A.D. 1650–1882.

THE age of the Ch'ings is the age in which we live ; but it is not so familiar to some persons as it ought to be, that a Tartar, and not a Chinese sovereign, is now seated upon the throne of China.

For some time after the accession of the first Manchu Emperor there was considerable friction between the two races, due, among other natural causes, to the enforced adoption of the peculiar coiffure in vogue among the Manchus—*i.e.*, the tail, or plaited queue of hair, which now hangs down every Chinaman's back. This fashion was for a long time vigorously resisted by the inhabitants of southern China, though now regarded by all alike as one of the most sacred characteristics of the 'black-haired people.' And when it ultimately became hopeless to oppose the inevitable, the southerners took to twisting their tails around their heads and concealing them under the turban, which is still a distinctive feature in the costume of the masses of Amoy and Swatow. At the present day the case is curiously reversed. Those Chinese emigrants who go forth to settle and make fortunes in British colonies, becoming naturalised British subjects, and even their British-born sons and grandsons,

reaching now to the third and fourth generations, steadily refuse to lay aside the tail, but cling fondly to the old custom, and to many other habits and customs of what, in everything but name, is still their fatherland.

The subjugation of the empire by the Manchus was followed by a military occupation of the country, which has survived the original necessity, and is part of the system of government at the present day. Garrisons of Tartar troops were stationed at various important centres of population, each under the command of a Tartar officer of the highest military grade, whose duty it was to co-operate with, and at the same time act as a check upon, the high authorities in the civil administration of the empire. Those Tartar garrisons still occupy the same positions; and the descendants of the first battalions, with occasional reinforcements from Peking, live side by side and in perfect harmony with the strictly Chinese populations. These Bannermen, as they are called, may be known by their square, heavy faces, which contrast strongly with the sharper and more astute physiognomies of the Chinese. They speak the dialect of Peking, now recognised as the official language *par excellence*. They do not use their family or surnames—which belong rather to the clan than to the individual—but in order to conform to the requirements of Chinese life, the personal name is substituted. Their women do not compress their feet, and the female coiffure and dress are wholly Tartar in character. Intermarriage between the two races is not considered desirable, though instances are not unknown.

In other respects, it is the old story of 'victa victrix'; the conquering Tartars have been themselves conquered by the people over whom they set themselves to rule. They have adopted the language, written and colloquial, of China; and they are fully as proud as the purest-blooded Chinese of the vast literature and glorious traditions of those past dynasties of which they have made themselves the joint heirs. Manchu, the language of the conquerors, is still kept alive at the Court of Peking. By a State fiction, it is supposed to be the language of the sovereign; but the Emperors of China have now in their youth to make a study of Manchu, just as much as the official interpreters and others whose duty it is to translate documents for the Imperial eye. It is by a somewhat similar fiction that skill in archery commands such a high value in these days of central-fire breech-loaders. The bow has played a leading part in the history of the Tartars; and the Manchus of to-day cannot bear that their once fatally effective weapon should be consigned to an undeserved oblivion.

Eight emperors of this line have already occupied the throne and 'become guests on high'; the ninth is yet a boy less than ten years of age. Of these eight, the second in every way fills the largest space in Chinese history. K'ang Hsi (*or* Kang Hi) reigned for sixty-one years, thus completing his cycle, or term of sixty years, a division of time which has been in vogue among the Chinese for many centuries past. He was essentially a wise and great ruler. He treated the early Catholic priests with kindness and distinction, and availed himself

in many ways of their scientific knowledge. He promulgated sixteen moral maxims, collectively known as the Sacred Edict, forming a complete code of rules for the guidance of every-day life, and presented in such terse yet intelligible terms that they at once took firm hold of the public mind, and have retained their position ever since. He tried to prevent the Chinese women from cramping their feet, and, contrary to the stipulations agreed to by his predecessor, he actually forbade the custom. Prejudice, however, proved too strong, and at the end of four years the prohibition was unwillingly withdrawn. K'ang Hsi was the most successful patron of literature the world has ever seen. He caused to be published, under his own personal supervision, the four following compilations, known as the Four Great Works of the present dynasty:—

(1). A huge thesaurus of extracts, in 110 thick volumes.

(2). An encyclopædia in 450 books, usually bound up in 160 volumes.

(3). An enlarged and improved edition of a herbarium, in 100 books.

(4). A complete collection of the important philosophical writings of Chu Hsi (see *The Sungs*) in sixty-six books.

In addition to these, the Emperor K'ang Hsi designed and gave his name to the great modern lexicon of the Chinese language, which contains over 40,000 characters under separate entries, accompanied in each case by appropriate citations from the works of authors of every

age and of every style. In spite, however, of literary activity on the above gigantic scale, it is a noticeable fact that individual distinction in literature has so far been gained by but few writers belonging to the present dynasty. Lan Lu-chow, with his twenty small volumes of essays, state papers, criminal cases, correspondence, a lengthy disquisition on the education of women, etc., etc., all of considerable merit, must take the place of literary representative of the dynasty. As a judge, his capacity was second only to that of the famous Pao of the Sung dynasty, and two out of the twenty volumes above mentioned are devoted to recording his triumphs on the magisterial bench. He protested against Buddhism with an eloquence which recalled the earnestness of Han Wên-kung, complaining that nine-tenths of the priests and nuns did not willingly take the vows, but had been 'given to the priests when quite little, either because their parents were too poor to keep them, or in return for some act of kindness.' 'These cloister folk,' added Lan Lu-chow, 'do a great deal of mischief amongst the populace, wasting the substance of some and robbing others of their good name.' And of such, we may add, is the Buddhist religion of to-day.

It may here be mentioned that China possesses an *Index Expurgatorius*—a list of works the publication of all or parts of which is strictly forbidden; in some cases because of the immorality, in others, because of the revolutionary sentiments expressed. The recollection of the Mings has not wholly died; neither are there wanting patriots whose watchword is 'China for the

Chinese: down with the Tartars.' The great Triad Society, the association of Heaven, Earth, and Man, which of all secret societies in China has been the most dreaded and the most severely prohibited, advocates nothing more than a return to *ming*, literally 'light.' This might of course be interpreted to mean intellectual or moral light, and the society has therefore been claimed, though on insufficient grounds, as an offshoot of Freemasonry; but the 'light' of the Ming dynasty is more probably the light intended, and it is in this sense that the Tartars punish with death any connection with the equivocal fraternity.

Under the third Manchu Emperor, Yung Chêng, began that violent persecution of the Catholics which has continued almost to the present day. The various sects—Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans—had been unable to agree about the Chinese equivalent for God, and the matter had been finally referred to the Pope. Another difficulty had arisen as to the toleration of ancestral worship by Chinese converts professing the Catholic faith. There was a time when, but for this particular hitch, it seems probable that the Chinese people might have been gained over to Rome. They clung fondly, however, to their traditional worship of departed ancestors; and as the Pope refused to permit the embodiment of this ancient custom with the ceremonies of the Catholic church, the new religion ceased to advance, and by-and-by fell into disrepute.

Ch'ien Lung (*or* Kien Lung), the fourth Emperor of the line, enjoyed a long and glorious reign. His

generals led a large army into Nepaul and conquered the Goorkhas, reaching a point only some sixty miles distant from British territory. Native accounts represent his Majesty as a very wonderful person. His hands are said to have reached below his knees; his ears touched his shoulders; and his eyes could see round behind his head. Like K'ang Hsi, he was a generous patron of literature, though only two instead of five great literary monuments remain to mark his sixty years of power. These are (1) a magnificent bibliographical work in 200 parts, consisting of a catalogue of the books in the Imperial library, with valuable historical and critical notices attached to the entries of each; and (2) a huge topography of the whole empire, in 500 books, beyond doubt one of the most comprehensive and exhaustive works of the kind ever published. K'ang Hsi had been a voluminous poet; but the productions of Ch'ien Lung far outnumber those of any previous or subsequent bard. For more than fifty years this Emperor was an industrious poet, finding time in the intervals of State duties to put together no fewer than 33,950 separate pieces. In the estimation, however, of this apparently impossible contribution to poetic literature, it must always be borne in mind that the stanza of four lines is a very favourite length for a 'poem,' and that the couplet is not uncommon. Even thus, a large balance stands to the credit of a Chinese Emperor, whose time is rarely his own, and whose day is divided out with wearisome regularity, beginning with councils and audiences long

before daylight has appeared. We gain a glimpse into Ch'ien Lung's court from the account of Lord Macartney's embassy in 1795, which was so favourably received by the venerable monarch a short time previous to his abdication, and three years before his death, and forms such a contrast with that of Lord Amherst to his successor in 1816.

With the opening years of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Chia Ch'ing, Protestant missionaries initiated a systematic attempt to convert the Chinese to Christianity; but the religious toleration of the latter, which on the whole has been a marked feature in their civilisation of all ages, had been sorely tried by the Catholics, and but little progress was made. In another direction, some of the early Protestant missionaries did good service to the world at large. They spent much of their time in grappling with the difficulties of the written language, and the publication of Dr. Morrison's famous dictionary may justly be regarded as the *point de départ* of all that has since been accomplished, culminating in the laborious and lasting achievements of Dr. Legge, the learned translator of the Chinese 'Classics,' and professor of Chinese at the University of Oxford.

The reign of Tao Kuang, the sixth Manchu Emperor, will be ever memorable for the so-called Opium War, the result of which was that, at the point of the bayonet, we extracted a treaty of commerce and a recognition of national equality from a nation which had up to that date looked upon us simply as unsubdued savages. The



trade in opium was legalised; the island of Hongkong was ceded to England; five ports were thrown open to commerce; and on the abolition of the old forms of restricted intercourse, foreigners began to flock in considerable numbers to what had previously been a 'hermit land.'

As the rod of empire was about to pass from Tao Kuang to Hsien Fêng, there arose the formidable rebellion of the T'ai-p'ings, which was by-and-by to shake the Manchu power to its foundation; and Hsien Fêng had been actually seated upon the throne only some four or five years, when the seizure of a dozen sailors on board a Chinese lorcha flying the British flag, led to a second war with foreign powers, to new treaties, and to the promised opening of new ports, with a considerable extension of trade. Then ensued a short period of friction, involving repudiation by the Chinese of responsibilities they had undertaken, refusal to allow our Minister to proceed to the capital, renewal of hostilities, and the ultimate capture of Peking by the allied French and English forces, and the flight and death of Hsien Fêng.

A mere child, the son of an Imperial concubine, succeeded in 1862 to the then unenviable position of ruler of the Chinese empire, which remained, however, for many years under the regency of the two Dowager Empresses, the wife\* and concubine of Hsien Fêng, aided by the counsels of the boy-Emperor's

\* Recently deceased.

uncle, Prince Kung. T'ung Chih himself had hardly attained his majority and nominally assumed the reins of government before he died of small-pox, an event which was shortly afterwards followed by the death of the girl-Empress he had just previously raised to the throne. Meanwhile, after much bloodshed and devastation of the country, the T'ai-p'ing rebellion had been crushed, chiefly through the valuable military services rendered to the Chinese Government by Colonel Gordon. A great Mahomedan rising, which dated back as far as 1856, and which had for its object the separation of the province of Yun-nan into an independent State, was some years afterwards brought to an end amid scenes of bloodshed and wholesale carnage.

Under the child who came to the throne in 1875, with the title of Kuang Hsü, we have seen the completion of Chinese re-conquests in Central Asia, and the restoration of Kuldja by the Russians. The empire is now at peace with all foreign Powers, and judging from the characteristic dislike of the Chinese to all war, aggressive or defensive,\* it may be predicted that this state of things will continue for some time to come. The progressive party in the nation's councils, under the leadership of Li Hung-chang, Viceroy of Chihli, is gradually gaining strength, amply posted as the Court of Peking now is in the affairs of Western countries. Even the old Conservative party, of which the successful and aged general Tso Tsung-t'ang is supposed to be the representative, has

\* "There is no such thing as a 'righteous war.' We can only assert that some wars are better than others."—*Mencius*.

vastly modified its tone since less than twenty years ago, when the ultra-patriotic Wo-jên expressed his desire to sleep on our skins.

It is true that the short experimental line of railway which had been laid down between Shanghai and Wusung was objected to, and finally got rid of, by the Chinese Government ; but the reason for this apparently retrograde step arose (1) out of the not very scrupulous means employed by the promoters of the scheme, and (2) out of the very natural dislike of an independent State to be forced into innovations for which it may not be altogether prepared. Since that date a telegraph line has been laid between Peking and Shanghai, forming the final connecting link between the capitals of the British and Chinese empires, and an attempt is now being made by a body of Chinese merchants to establish themselves permanently and transact their own business in London without the assistance of foreigners. For many years past the Anglo-Saxon has been urging upon the 'Mongolian' the necessity of moving more rapidly along the path of progress. It will be well if, in the coming centuries, the Mongolian does not advance with more speed than is actually consistent with the worldly interests of the Anglo-Saxon.

Under this dynasty the empire has been divided into eighteen provinces, forming China proper, to which must be added the huge areas of Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, and even of Tibet, which last the Chinese claim as a dependency, sending a political agent to reside at the Tibetan capital. An elaborate Penal Code

was drawn up early in the dynasty, upon a mitigated scale of severity as compared with that of the Mings, and several administrative and other reforms were made. The peacock's feather and the 'button' were introduced, as rewards for merit and distinctive marks of rank, respectively. Tobacco was first brought to China by the Manchus, who are said to have got it from Japan, through the Corean peninsula. Some opposition was then raised to its growth in the country, on the ground that soil would thereby be withdrawn from the more desirable cultivation of grain; but now it is widely cultivated, and largely smoked by both sexes.

A few words as to the modern government of the empire with its three hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants. Roughly speaking, all Chinese society may be divided into two classes—rulers and ruled. An official career, including all the highest and most lucrative posts, is open to every man who can pass successfully through the ordeal of the great public competitions. This fact, taken as a set-off against the practically democratic spirit of the Chinese people, goes far to reconcile them with their form of government, which in all outward form is essentially despotic. The Chinese, as a nation, recognise the necessity of being governed, and they believe in the divine right of their emperors. They throw open the public service to competition, and agree to regard successful competitors as their masters rather than their servants. Hence, they think it right to put up with a great deal that would not be tolerated in the extreme West. Still, there is

a point beyond which the mandarin advances at his peril; for riots inevitably follow, and the mandarin in whose district any demonstration of the kind has been made may as well 'hang up his hat and go home.' His career, if not actually at an end, is at any rate temporarily checked. This possibly may disabuse the minds of some of a most egregious misconception, namely, that the Chinese are a down-trodden people, to be compared with the Egyptian fellah.

In conclusion, it may astonish a great many persons to hear that the normal state of the people of China is one of considerable prosperity and great national happiness. Those who inhabited the districts visited a few years ago by an awful famine were of course neither prosperous nor happy for the time being; but famine is not the normal condition of any portion of the empire, and it is to the normal condition of China that these remarks refer. No one can live long among the Chinese, and watch them at work or at rest, in city or afield, without being especially struck by their immense fund of buoyancy and cheerfulness of disposition. They seem to have acquired a national habit of looking upon the brighter side. They regard death only as a hateful necessity, meeting it with firmness and equanimity when the hour comes. Older persons seek to accustom themselves to the idea by preparing—and often by sleeping in—their coffins for months, and sometimes for years, before they are actually needed. The cheery mirth and laughter, even of the more squalid-looking Chinese villages, must be seen and heard to be believed

in. Apart from their professional beggars, who form a not very numerous class and pursue their calling according to fixed regulations, there are none of those grim or sad-looking, hunger-stricken, sometimes drink-sodden creatures, whose presence is such a blot on our own civilisation at home. Food and lodging are cheap in China; and it may be roundly stated that every man, woman, and child in the empire has something in the way of clothes, two full meals a day, and a shelter for his head at night. The meals may not be tempting, nor the clothing extensive, nor the shelter altogether such as is desired by Europeans; but the result is at any rate life, and life of a bearable kind, which has its occasionally rosy streaks.

## THE PENAL CODE.

[This work contains (1) the immutable statute laws of the empire, derived in great part from the previous Code of the Mings, and (2) such modifications, extensions, and restrictions of these fundamental laws as time and circumstances have made necessary. In the striking words of Mr. G. Jamieson, the former portion bears the same ratio to the latter portion as the charters of the early Norman Kings to the legislation of the past fifty years.]

THE punishments of the Chinese, under the present dynasty, are confined to (1) flogging with the bamboo, (2) banishment for a given time or permanently to a given distance, and (3) death by decapitation or strangulation.

The ordinary instruments of punishment, as authorised by the Code, are :—

(1). A flat, polished piece of bamboo, of a given length, breadth, weight, etc.

(2). The *cangue*, a square wooden collar of about 30 *lbs.* weight.

(3). An iron chain, about seven feet long and of about 7 *lbs.* weight.

(4). Manacles of wood, for male prisoners only.

(5). Iron fetters, to be used only in cases of banishment or sentence of death.

It is true that in an 'additional' clause two instruments of torture are enumerated, (1) for compressing the

ankle-bones, and (2) for squeezing the fingers, to be used if necessary to extort a confession in cases of robbery or homicide. The application, however, of these tortures is fenced round in such a way as to impose great responsibility upon the presiding magistrate; and in addition to the risk of official impeachment, there is the more dreaded certainty of a loss of influence and popular esteem. A judge, in the opinion of the Chinese, should be able to read the inmost heart of an accused man as it were the page of a book spread out before him; and when the crime is fairly brought home, it is an almost understood thing that the culprit will confess. Of this fact, I have witnessed several striking examples; while on the other hand, all my most recent investigations confirm to the full the statements made by me some six years ago on this subject, to the effect that 'torture,' though not unknown in China, exists there practically in name alone.

It is also worthy of note that the 'lingering death,' about which so many horrible stories have been told, is not among the punishments here formally enumerated. Mention of it, however, occurs in another part of the code, as the proper punishment for high treason. But again all evidence tends to prove that though many are condemned, no one is ever subjected to this truly barbarous process, the very exceptions which might possibly be discovered, forming of course part of the proof. As a matter of fact, there is a great deal more lenity in the *Penal Code* of China than most people are aware of. During the excessive summer heats, some



punishments are mitigated, and others remitted altogether. Prompt surrender and acknowledgment of an offence, before it is otherwise discovered, entitles the offender, except in certain cases, to a full and free pardon ; as also does restitution of stolen property to its owner by a repentant thief. Neither are the near relatives, nor even the servants and slaves of a guilty man, punishable for concealing his crime and assisting him to escape—truly a great concession to the weakness of human nature. And, further, in the case of a criminal charged with two or more offences, it is provided that he shall be punished only to the extent of the principal charge. There are, *per contra*, ten heinous crimes for the commission of which no justification is allowed, and which are absolutely excepted from the benefit of any general act of grace. These are (1) Rebellion, (2) Destruction of Imperial Tombs, (3) Treachery to the State, (4) Parricide, (5) Murder of three persons in one family, (6) Sacrilege, (7) Filial Impiety, (8) Family Discord, (9) Official Insubordination, and (10) Incest. Children under seven, as in English law regarding felony, and persons over the age of ninety, are not punishable under any circumstances, the crimes of treason and rebellion only being excepted ; and in all cases, except capital crimes, where the offender is under fifteen or over seventy, punishment proper may be redeemed by payment of a fine.

And before passing on to Book II. of these immutable laws, it may be noted that at least one of them has in practice been altogether abrogated at the instance of the

Western barbarian. For it is expressly stated that foreigners who may be guilty of any crimes within the limits of the Chinese Empire shall be dealt with according to the provisions of this Penal Code. Wars and Treaties have changed all that, and the subjects of other nations are now tried in China, on the extra-territorial principle, by their own authorities administering their own laws.

Book II. treats, as has been stated, of laws relating to officials, and gives an insight into the various responsibilities attaching to members of the ruling class. Especial stress is laid upon the safe keeping of archives and of the seal of office with which each mandarin above a certain rank is entrusted ; upon impartiality at the competitive examinations ; upon a close acquaintance with the provisions and penalties of the Code, and so forth ; in reference to which latter clause, it is necessary to state that the mandarins as a rule know nothing whatever of the details of the Code, but depend wholly upon a well-paid class of 'law experts,' who familiarise themselves with both the fundamental and additional laws, and are ready to give chapter and verse at a moment's notice as required.

The 'Fiscal' section is more interesting. We have there regulations for the due registration of every Chinese subject, for the licensing of Buddhist monasteries, for the adoption of children, and for the case of aged and infirm persons, which by the way is admittedly the business of the State when no relatives or connections are forthcoming. The laws of mortgage and usury (*36 per cent.*

being the extreme limit), of marriage and divorce, of coinage, of customs' duties, of taxes, of prohibited articles of export and import, of monopolies, of false weights and measures, and of manufactures not so 'strong, durable, or genuine, as they profess to be,' are also among the more important on the list. An adopted child must be of the same surname as his adopting father,\* unless the former is under three years of age; and even then he is not entitled to inherit upon failure of children, as would otherwise be the case. Sons are not allowed to separate from their parents and set up their own establishments, the social unit of China having always been the family rather than the individual. No man can have more than one legal wife, contrary to the general opinion of foreigners, who persist in mixing up concubines with wives. He is consequently forbidden from marrying a second as long as his first wife is alive. Of concubines, he may have as many as he likes; but even here a conventionality of custom steps in, and prevents any egregious outrage upon decency and common sense. No marriage may be contracted during the stated period of mourning for parents, nor during their imprisonment, nor with persons of the same surname,† nor by officials with any female member of a family under their particular jurisdiction or with actresses and musicians—a tabooed caste—nor by priests of Buddha or Tao with any women whatever, nor between free citizens and slaves. Tea, salt, and alum, may not be sold without

\* See p. 108.

† There are some curious exceptions to this important rule.

a licence, nor except under fixed conditions ; smuggling is punished with fifty blows and forfeit of half value, part of the sum forfeited going to the informer. Interest on money lent is not to exceed 3 per cent. per month, and 'whatever the period of years or months may be upon which interest is due at the day of repayment, no more shall be received or demanded than the original and the lawful interest thereon, to any amount not exceeding the principal.' I may mention, *en passant*, that a case came under my personal notice in which a mandarin refused to recover a sum due on a bill by a Chinese to a British merchant because, it was alleged, the latter had already received more money in the shape of interest than would have covered both interest and principal up to the date at which the bill fell due. All property found lying about without an owner is to be delivered up to the district magistrate within five days ; and if the owner is discovered within thirty days, the finder receives half as a reward for his trouble. Otherwise, the whole is returned to him.

Book IV. deals with religions, ceremonial observances, sumptuary laws, and other topics of the kind. The vestiges that remain of the old nature-worship of the Chinese, under their later guise of sacrifices and invocations to Heaven and Earth, have here their allotted place ; and any performance of the sacred rites connected therewith is strictly forbidden, not only to private individuals, but also to Buddhist and other priests. Magic and sorcery, the possession of astrological books, and superstitious associations in general, as well as religious

processions, are further prohibited under severe penalties, though in the latter of these the law is more widely honoured in the breach than in the observance. This section includes, too, the preparation of food and medicine for his Imperial Majesty. The doctor's prescriptions must be made up according to recipes sanctioned by established practice. The dishes served by the cook must be clean and properly prepared. They must have been previously tasted by him, and must not contain other than duly authorised articles of food, or, in addition to the punishment of one hundred blows,\* he will be compelled to swallow them himself. No one is permitted to use silks or other stuffs embroidered with the Imperial emblems—the Dragon and the Phoenix. Priests' robes are to be of a single colour and simple in pattern, and they themselves are not to be excused from the important duty of worshipping at the tombs of their ancestors, although by the doctrines of the Buddhist Church all family ties are severed at entrance into the priesthood. Concealment of a death, and omission of mourning rites (involving in the case of an official mourning for a parent a retirement of three years from public life), as also any neglect to perform the proper funeral ceremonies, and similar offences, are all severely punished—a son or wife who plays upon a musical instrument during his or her period of mourning for the dead being visited with a punishment of no less than eighty

\* The actual number inflicted is always reduced, according to a fixed scale.

blows. Cremation is forbidden, and so is water burial; but it is permitted to the children of a man dying in a distant country to consume their father's corpse with fire, if positively unable to bring it back for ordinary burial in his native district. The cremation of priests, however, is tolerated in practice, though not provided for in the Code.

Book V. consists chiefly of laws relating to military organisation and the protection of the frontier. It contains besides many interesting laws on other subjects which could not be so conveniently introduced elsewhere. For instance, a punishment of one hundred blows is awarded to any person unauthorisedly passing through the gates of the Imperial enclosure within the city of Peking, at a stone's throw from which is situated the once ducal park now occupied by the buildings of the British Legation. But the penalty for entering in like manner any room occupied by his Majesty, is death by strangulation. The same severe penalty is inflicted upon any one who shoots an arrow or bullet, or even throws a stone, in the direction of an Imperial residence, 'with any apparent possibility of hitting such place or building.' Decapitation—regarded by the Chinese as a severer form of death merely because the body will thereby appear mutilated in the realms below to which the spirits of the dead are believed to descend—awaits those officers or soldiers who, in the face of an enemy, 'set the example of giving way or retreating.' Pillage by soldiers within the limits of the empire is absolutely forbidden under the same penalty; and also, under

mitigated penalties, in territories beyond the frontier. No horses, cattle, ironware capable of being wrought into weapons, copper coin, silk, gauzes, or satins, may be clandestinely exported; neither may a man kill his own horses, horned animals, camels, mules, or asses, without a special permission from the State. Forty blows are inflicted for neglect to secure dangerous animals, or for not destroying mad dogs. The owner of any such animal or dog which causes the death of another person is liable to the punishment for manslaughter, though allowed to redeem the same by payment of a fine. Insertion of some of these clauses into a 'military' section appears rather anomalous, but the fact is that the Code as a whole, whatever its other strong points may be, is not a model of categorical accuracy.

Book VI., containing what for want of a better term have been styled the 'criminal' laws, is an eminently interesting portion of the work. It opens with the terrible punishment of 'a slow and painful execution,' commonly known as the 'lingering death,' for all persons found guilty of high treason, which crime includes destruction, as principal or accessory, of the tombs of the Emperors of the present dynasty. The same punishment is set apart for the equally hideous crime of parricide; and once every now and again the *Peking Gazette* records the due execution by this process of some unnatural child. A slave who kills his master is also similarly liable. It seems idle to renew here a protest entered six years ago against the prevalent—and in many ways justifiable—belief that the details of this

disgusting process are, as a general rule, carried out. In spite of much declamatory opposition, that protest remains precisely *in statu quo*. Innumerable opportunities have since occurred for deciding the question one way or the other, but no one has yet come forward to say that he has seen a Chinese malefactor deliberately sliced to death. Meanwhile, all available evidence favours the view that this form of death is practised, like many other Chinese institutions, only on paper.

Larceny, embezzlement, and the acquisition of property by other fraudulent means, naturally occupy a considerable space in this section of the Code. An ordinary attempt to steal is punished by fifty blows; actual theft is punished according to a fixed scale, ranging from sixty blows for one ounce of silver, to death by strangulation for a value of one hundred and twenty ounces (say £35) and upwards. On a first conviction, criminals should be branded with the character 'thief' on the left arm; on a second, with the same character on the other arm; but a third offence, or even defacement of the marks, is punishable with death. Theft of grain and fruit is forbidden under *ad valorem* penalties; in practice, however, the plea of hunger is always sufficient to secure dismissal, with a warning not to offend again. Stealing from relatives is punished on a mitigated scale; obtaining money under false pretences, on the same scale as ordinary larceny, but without branding; extorting by threats, on a scale more severe by one degree. Robbery with violence, even though no injury has been inflicted, is also more heavily punished than mere larceny; and if



the victim has been wounded, the punishment is death by decapitation. Highway robbery involves a similar death to all parties concerned; so does the theft of an official seal from a magistrate or other functionary of the State, and also a rescue, or even an attempt to rescue, any prisoner from custody. Kidnapping by stratagem is punishable with banishment to a distance of 3,000 *li* and one hundred blows; if by violence, with death. To disturb a grave and expose a coffin is a serious crime; if the coffin is opened, the punishment is death. For unauthorisedly entering a house at night, eighty blows are inflicted. If the master of the house should shoot the intruder dead on the spot, he is held guiltless; he may not, however, seize him first and then shoot him. What constitutes an actual theft is carefully defined in the Code. In the case of money and easily portable articles, they must have been removed from the place or room where found, an exception being made for jewels and small valuables, the mere possession of which about the person is regarded as an actual theft. Large articles must have been placed in a cart or on the back of an animal; and horses and cattle must have been taken out of the stable. Otherwise, the crime comes under 'attempt to steal,' and is punished accordingly. If a thief takes a single animal from a stable, and the rest follow, the extent of his crime is limited to the value of the one; always excepting the case of a foal following a mare, which renders him liable according to the value of the two. Homicide is punished either by decapitation or

strangulation, as the circumstances of the murder may require. An attempt to murder is punished by strangulation, providing that wounds were inflicted by the intending murderer; otherwise, he receives one hundred blows, and is banished for three years. Accidental homicide in a brawl is visited with strangulation; and so is homicide resulting from any kind of dangerous play. A son may kill the murderer of his father or mother on the spot and be held guiltless; if he defers his revenge, he is punished with sixty blows—not for deferring, but for perpetrating the crime. A husband may in like manner kill an adulterous wife, or her paramour, or both, provided he does so on the spot, but not at a later period. A man who should remove a ladder from a wall, or a bridle from a horse, is held responsible for all consequences to any persons injured by such acts. Homicide which is purely accidental in every respect is nominally awarded the same punishment as homicide in a brawl: but this may be redeemed by payment of a fine. The death of a patient under the hands of a doctor would come under this provision; if, however, it could be shown that the latter had wantonly deviated from the established rules of practice, he would be beheaded. If a wife strikes her father- or mother-in-law, and the husband kills her, he receives only one hundred blows. But if he kills her for mere disrespect to their memories, and so forth, he is punished by strangulation. And any one who for some unlawful purpose threatens another so that he is driven to commit suicide, is punished by decapitation. Ordinary

cases of battery are met by ordinary punishments; but where severe wounds are inflicted, an examination is made into the sufferer's condition by the local magistrate, and a 'period of responsibility' is fixed upon. If the injured man outlives this, or recovers in the interim and dies from some other well-ascertained cause, then the offender is punished only for a common assault; but if death occurs within the assigned limit, the case becomes one of murder, and the inflicter of the wounds is punished accordingly with death. During the above-mentioned period the injured person is entrusted to the care of his assailant, who is most likely to do all in his power to effect a cure. Any one who strikes an officer of government is heavily punished with one hundred blows and banishment for three years; in the case of an open wound, the penalty is death by strangulation. A slave who strikes a free man, and a free man who strikes a slave, are punished one degree more and one degree less severely than would be the case but for this distinction between their respective social positions. A slave who designedly strikes his master is beheaded; if by accident, he is strangled. A wife who strikes her husband receives one hundred blows, and the latter is entitled to a divorce; but a husband who chastises his wife is liable to no punishment, unless he goes so far as to inflict an open wound. If, however, the wife dies of the beating, her husband is punished with death by strangulation. A son who strikes his father, mother, or paternal grandparents, and a wife who strikes her husband's parents, are both liable to death by decapitation. A man who

unintentionally beats his disobedient son or grandson to death is punished with one hundred blows ; should he accomplish this designedly, the punishment is increased to sixty blows and one year's banishment. Abusive language in general is punished by ten blows ; from a slave to a master, by strangulation ; from a child or grandchild, by the same extreme penalty, provided always the person abused heard the abuse and made a formal complaint.

With regard to indictments generally, it is incumbent on every prosecutor to begin by filing his charge at the lowest tribunal of justice within the district, under a penalty of fifty blows. Any person filing a false charge is punished a certain number of degrees more heavily than the accused would have been punished had he been convicted of the crime alleged. But if the charge is false in degree only, then he receives himself the difference between the punishments for the crime alleged and the crime committed. Authors of anonymous charges are liable to strangulation, irrespective of the truth or falsehood of the charge. No charge is allowed to be filed by a child, grandchild, or wife, even if the accusation is true, under a penalty of fifty blows ; and the parent, grandparent, or husband, may escape all punishment for the same by voluntary surrender. But if the charge is untrue, even in part, the accuser is strangled. Stirring up litigation of any kind is punished according to a fixed scale. The laws against bribery are exceedingly severe, acceptance of eighty ounces of silver for an unlawful and of one hundred and twenty for a lawful object, rendering a mandarin liable to death by strangulation. It is death

by decapitation to forge an official seal, or to issue a spurious edition of the *Imperial Almanac*, or to falsely pass oneself off as a government official. It is death by strangulation to counterfeit the common coin of the realm, or to commit rape, the limit of age—under which all cases are considered as such—being twelve years. Gambling—the national vice of China—is forbidden by the Code under a penalty of eighty blows and forfeiture of the stakes; but a few friends meeting in a private house are not thereby prohibited from playing at games of skill or chance for stakes of food or drink. Arson is punishable according to its results, death being the penalty if anybody is burnt. Even to set fire to one's own house accidentally is punishable by forty blows; if the fire spreads, by fifty; and if any one is killed, by one hundred blows. It is forbidden to represent upon public or private stages the persons of any 'emperors, empresses, famous princes, ministers, and generals of former ages,' under penalty of one hundred blows; but actual enforcement of this law has fallen into desuetude, if indeed it can be shown to have ever been enforced at all. The remainder of this theatrical clause is evidence that the real value of the drama has not been misunderstood:—'Nevertheless, it is not intended by this law to prohibit the exhibition upon the stage of fictitious characters of just and upright men, of chaste wives, and pious and obedient children, all which may tend to dispose the minds of the spectators to the practice of virtue.' The rest of this section is taken up with elaborate laws relating to the arrest, trial,

and execution of prisoners. Constables are punishable if they fail to recover stolen property or to produce the thieves. Prisoners are not to be ill-treated while awaiting their trial in gaol. 'Torture' is not to be applied to witnesses under fifteen or over seventy years of age. Women are not to be committed to prison at all, except in capital cases, or in cases of adultery; and the underlings who bamboo culprits are not to inflict blows with great noise and little pain, as many of them are able to do, under penalty of receiving themselves all such punishment as is not severely administered.

Book VII. relates entirely to public works: to the proper preservation of public buildings, of high roads, and of bridges; and to the prevention of floods by the maintenance of durable embankments along the banks of rivers.

The above is, of course, only a rapid and insufficient survey of the Chinese Penal Code, professing no more than to give a general insight into a truly monumental work, the mere existence, still less tenor, of which is very widely unknown. An attempt will be made in the following chapters to exhibit something of the working of this Code in real life—the practice as opposed to the theories of Chinese law.

## LAN LU-CHOW'S CRIMINAL CASES.

LAN LU-CHOW, who has already been mentioned on page 115 as the literary representative of the present dynasty, was born in the year 1680 at a small village in the province of Fohkien. Entering official life, he ultimately became a district magistrate and distinguished himself by his just and incorrupt administration as much as by his literary abilities. He managed, however, to make enemies among his superior officers, and for some trifling matter he was impeached and thrown incontinently into prison. His case was subsequently laid before the Emperor, who not only set him free but appointed him Prefect at Canton, bestowing upon him at the same time some valuable medicine, an autograph copy of verses, a sable robe, some 'joss-stick' or incense, and other coveted marks of Imperial favour. But all was in vain. He died of a broken heart one month after taking up his post, at the age of fifty-three. His complete works have been published in twenty small octavo volumes, two of which are devoted to a record of the chief criminal cases tried by him during his short judicial career. These cases are twenty-four in all, of which twelve have been translated for this volume, together with the editor's characteristic preface, which here follows, and may perhaps serve as a specimen of that particular branch of Chinese composition.

## PREFACE.

My master, Lu-chow, was sitting alone in his mud hut, his days and nights occupied by literary labours, when chancing to pass by, I said to him, "Ah me! and can you in this state of inaction be yourself for a single day?" "Under whatever conditions I am placed," replied Lu-chow, smiling, "I am always myself; but whether this is inaction or not, that I cannot say." Just then a number of people arrived, some from ten, others from a hundred *li*, and all bringing with them either a basket or a box. "Alas!" said they, in the fulness of their sympathy, "here was his Honour governing us for all the world like Lung-t'u \* of old, when this unexpected calamity came upon him, against which we all most loudly protest." My master smiled and thanked them, at the same time waving his hand and saying, "Do not repeat these words; it is not kindness to me to speak thus." Meanwhile, a man of over eighty years of age, named Wang Hsi-wu, and a native of the Hui-lai district, arrived from a tramp of 200 *li*, which he had accomplished with the aid of a staff. He brought five pints of rice and ten or a dozen eggs as a present to Lu-chow; and, bursting into tears, cried out, "O Heaven! O Heaven! who would have thought that our worthy magistrate should be brought to this!" I sighed when I thus saw how my master's

\* Judge Pao, mentioned on pp. 85, 92.



marvellous administration had affected even the adjoining districts, so that when he had been dismissed from office public sympathy was not confined to the Ch'ao-yang and P'u-ning districts alone.

My master's judicial capacity was of a remarkably high order, as though the mantle of Pao Hsiao-su \* had descended upon him. In very difficult cases he would investigate dispassionately and calmly, appearing to possess some unusual method for worming out the truth; so that the most crafty lawyers and the most experienced scoundrels, whom no logic could entangle and no pains intimidate, upon being brought before Lu-chow, found themselves deserted by their former cunning, and confessed readily without waiting for the application of torture. I, indeed, have often wondered how it is that torture is brought into requisition so much in judicial investigations. For, under the influence of the 'three wooden instruments,'† what evidence is there which cannot be elicited?—to say nothing of the danger of a mistake and the unutterable injury thus inflicted upon the departed spirit in the realms below. Now, Lu-chow, in investigating and deciding cases, was fearful only lest his people should not obtain a full and fair hearing; he, therefore, argued each point with them quietly and kindly until they were thoroughly committed to a certain position, with no possibility of backing out, and then he decided the case upon its merits as thus set forth. By such means, those who

\* See Note on preceding page.

† The cangue, the finger-squeezer, and the ankle-squeezer.

were bamboosed had no cause for complaint, while those who were condemned to die, died without resenting their sentence; the people were unable to deceive him, and they did not even venture to make the attempt. Thus did he carry out the Confucian doctrine of respecting popular feeling; \* and were all judicial officers to decide cases in the same careful and impartial manner, there would not be a single injured suitor under the canopy of heaven.

Subsequently, calling to mind past events, my master chose from among the cases he had tried a certain number † that presented unusual circumstances, and formed them into a two volume work under the title of *Miscellaneous Cases*, the collection similarly published under the name and authorship of Pao Lung-t'u, being, for aught I know, a mixture of truth and falsehood; at any rate, containing so much of the supernatural as to be valueless to the student, even were the authenticity of the work less doubtful than it is. ‡ In Lu-Chow's work, however, this basis has been changed, and, with the addition of an elegant style, the result is a most useful book. And when other friends were sympathising with my master in the calamity that had overtaken a faithful servant of the State, I alone congratulated him upon it; for in one who had fulfilled his duties towards his

\* Enunciated in the *Great Learning*, or *Book of Wisdom*, a politico-ethical treatise of the Confucian period, attributed by some to Confucius himself.

† See p. 141.

‡ See the specimen case on pp. 92-8.

sovereign in such a manner as to win the esteem of the people, striving after and attaining to a due regard for the public welfare,\* what cause could there be of self-reproach?—and, further, does not Mencius tell us that life is strengthened by misfortune and sorrow [while death is nurtured in ease and pleasure]? †

My master, from the time he first entered official life, found leisure, as magistrate of the P'u-ning district, for eating and sleeping only. ‡ But he had not been there so much as two months before the good effect of his administration was complete; and the higher officials, seeing that he was a man of genius, accordingly bade him take over the seals of Ch'ao-yang in addition to those of P'u-ning. On the day he received these orders, he set off for the former magistracy, and managed on the way to investigate no less than three cases of murder. Arriving at Ch'ao-yang, he had to deal with a scarcity of military supplies during the preceding half-year, consequent upon recent bad harvests; with organised banditti, whose depredations compelled travellers to move only in armed companies, and even then without absolute security; with hardened scoundrels, who would oppress the friendless and the weak, steal men's wives,

\* Adapted from the Confucian *Discourses*.

† Only the first half of the quotation is given in the text, no literary man requiring more than the key-word to any allusion taken from books which are committed to memory as a first step to knowledge.

‡ In busy districts the magistrates are very hard worked, being often engaged until past midnight, and obliged to be up again with the dawn.

sell their children, strive to get possession of their property or rights, etc., etc.—the number of petitioners in one day amounting to between one and two thousand. My master set to work upon all this with a will. He devised means of supplying the soldiers with food; he tranquillised the brigand-infested country; and repressed the iniquities of lawless villains. He disposed of every case as soon as it came before him, beginning business with the dawn of day, and only retiring to his evening meal at the second or third beat of the drum.\* He would not entrust any one with the secretarial work of either the judicial or revenue departments; and only at the sixth crow of the cock† would he lie down to sleep, to rise again with the first streaks of light in the east. Thus he went on for more than a year without a day, nay, a moment's interval; for when the district was quieted and brought under proper control, there still remained war-junks, forts, city walls, and grain supplies, to occupy his attention to the utmost. Yet, as the 1st and 15th of each moon came round, he would proceed to expound to the students the doctrines of Confucianism,‡ ever striving thereby to inspire them with sentiments of reverence for the sovereign, of filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, and honour. And when this task was over, he would make critical remarks upon

\* Between 9 and 11 p.m.

† The Chinese hold various opinions as to the number of times and hours at which cocks crow during the night.

‡ By reading aloud the *Sacred Edict*, a collection of sixteen maxims or rules of life, published by the Emperor Kang Hi. See p. 114.

their essays; until at length his friends upbraided him for overstraining his powers, asking which was of the greater importance—his official reputation, or his life. "If I remain one day," replied Lu-chow, "unoccupied in this way, then a feeling comes over me that I am not doing my duty towards my sovereign. I am but a blade of grass; yet I have been laden with Imperial favours. [Like K'ung-ming] I will exhaust every effort and perish in the attempt." \*

As for me, I knew that my master's misfortune was in reality a mark of Divine appreciation, and was sent upon him in order to lengthen out his span of days. Henceforth, he would be able to follow the bent of his inclination among groves of trees and springs of water, and gain a place for himself by his writings among the immortals of literature. And even should he be called upon again to undertake the toils of office, then this period of retreat—this experience of the vicissitudes of life and of the winds and waves of an official career—these would all aid towards the more successful accomplishment of his destiny. I therefore congratulated my master, believing him fully capable of enjoying the enjoyments that lay within his grasp. The district of Ch'ao-yang was at peace; doors were not bolted at night; and habits of mutual good feeling and consideration began to prevail. Ye who read this collection of cases by Lu-chow should do so knowing something

\* A phrase used by the famous general K'ung-ming, or Chu-ko Liang, in an address to the son of Liu Pei. These names will be familiar to every student of Chinese history. See p. 44.

of the man under whose name they appear, and not admire them only for the sake of the novelties they contain.

Such is my preface, written in this spring-time of the Chi-yu year\* of Yung-Chêng, at Hêng-shan, by me, his fellow-student, K'uang Min-pên; and I herewith make my bow.

\* A.D. 1729.

## THE THREE BODY-SNATCHERS.

On the 13th of the seventh moon of the year Ting-wei (1727) I entered upon my official career as magistrate of the P'u-ning district. A month had hardly passed away before I was petitioned by a man, named Wang Shih-i, in the matter of the death of a younger brother,\* by poison. He stated that deceased, named A-hsiung, was his second cousin, and that when the latter's mother had become, in second nuptials, the concubine of a P'u-ning man, named Ch'ên T'ien-wan, her son had accompanied her to her new home. That the wife of this Ch'ên, being jealous, had caused A-hsiung's death by poison, deceased's fingers being found to be drawn up and his teeth and lips of a livid hue. He filed at the same time the usual bond providing that he was to suffer the usual punishment in the event of the accusation being false.† All this seemed to be very plausible, and next morning I went to hold the inquest, but found no signs of the corpse; upon which Wang Shih-i, with much vociferation, singled out Ch'ên T'ien-wan, and declared that, in fear of the consequences, he had made away with the body. Ch'ên and his family stared at one another in blank amazement without uttering a word, while I calmly and

\* The term 'brother' is of wider application in China than with us, as will be seen in the next sentence. Hence the explanation of the numerous 'brothers' whom our Chinese servants are always recommending for vacant posts.

† See p. 138.

dispassionately elicited the fact that A-hsiung had been ill about two months with dysentery, this being corroborated by the evidence of the doctor who had attended on him. I noticed at the same time that Ch'ên's wife, who was supported by several persons, was suffering from a severe dropsy of nine years' standing, and was in a pitiable condition, not at all resembling one who would poison anybody from jealousy; and, out of a dozen witnesses examined in connection with the accused, not one could tell me what had become of the corpse. It then occurred to me that Wang Shih-i had himself taken it away; and, summoning the mother of the deceased boy, I asked her whether on the day of her son's death Wang Shih-i had gone to the house or not. "I invited him to come," replied she, "but he would not;" adding that he came on the following day, but even then did not enter the door, passing on to visit a female cousin of his. I inquired if this female cousin had a husband, and was informed that she had a son of about fifteen, whom I immediately sent for, and found out from him that on such and such a day Wang Shih-i had met him in the road and had not gone into the house, but had asked whether or not A-hsiung had been buried. "I said he had," continued the boy; "and then he wanted to know where, to which I replied that the grave was on the hills at the back, after which he went away." Thereupon, I struck the table with my hand, and cried in a loud voice: "The body has been stolen away by Wang Shih-i." Being then examined under torture,\* he

\* His fingers were squeezed.



confessed that he had hired a beggar to open the grave at dead of night and carry off A-hsiung's corpse ; but when I came to ask him further as to its place of concealment and the lawyer under whose advice he had acted, he began to fence and would not speak out the truth. So, fearing that he might be intimidated by the presence of some among the bystanders, I sentenced him to thirty blows with the bamboo, and ordered him to be taken back to the district city and placed in the cangue ;\* while Ch'ên T'ien-wan and his family, as well as all the other persons who had been implicated in this prosecution, were formally released. Several thousand people had been collected together as spectators ; and these, one and all believing that the case was now at an end, rent the air with their shouts as they crowded round to salute me. I, however, had not gone above a furlong on my way home when I called one of the sturdiest runners to my side, and bade him doff his official hat and coat † and hurry on to an inn at the east gate of the city, where he was to inquire how long a stranger, named Wang Shih-i, had stayed in the house, and which room he had occupied ; and, then, if he found any one in the said room, he was to arrest him and bring him before me. The runner thus managed to get hold of a lawyer, ‡

\* In other words, the torture applied was not pushed to extreme limits.

† Official servants on duty wear long coats down to their heels.

‡ The term is convenient, though applicable only to a class of pettifoggers who 'get up' cases, prime witnesses, draw up petitions, and so forth. No pleading by counsel or attorney is permitted in a Chinese court ; consequently, China has no 'Bar.'

named Wang Ch'üo-t'ing; but the latter comported himself easily as if he knew nothing about the matter, swearing that he was not even acquainted with Wang Shih-i, who, by the way, kept his eyes steadily turned in another direction. In fact, his whole behaviour was such as to make it difficult for me to find a loop-hole to take advantage of, when I recollected that, besides Wang Shih-i, there would be subscribed to the charge filed by him the names both of the man who drafted it and of the guarantor of good faith.\* So I sent off quietly and caused these two persons to be produced, and from them I learnt that Wang Ch'üo-t'ing had been among the party. However, as he still refused to admit his share in the business, I handed him a pen and paper and bade him write down his deposition; whereupon I immediately saw from the character of his handwriting that he had copied the original petition, the two styles being as like as the two halves of a tally. The three wooden instruments† were accordingly brought into play; and at length he acknowledged that the scheme of stealing the body and burying it, as had been done, in another district,‡ had been sketched out by an old lawyer, named Ch'ên Wei-tu, from whom the actual spot, which even Wang Shih-i did not know, might be ascertained. Swift runners were forthwith despatched to arrest Ch'ên Wei-tu, who turned out to be an old

\* Without which no charge may be entertained.

† The cangue, the finger-squeezer, and the ankle-squeezer.

‡ Thereby increasing the difficulties of the authorities, the jurisdiction of a magistrate being strictly limited to his own district.

scoundrel ten times more crafty\* than Wang Chüo-t'ing. He swore he was an injured man; that Ch'ên T'ien-wan was his cousin,† and that the two Wangs in the wickedness of their hearts were striving to ruin his said cousin by bringing this false charge of murder against him. "But happily," continued he, "they fell across a judge who exposed their villany and frustrated their designs; and now that they are trying to ruin me in the same way, unless your Honour is Lung-t'u‡ come back to earth, my cousin and I shall go down to the grave with unclosed eyes."§ At this story, which seemed to me plausible enough, I was rather inclined to release the man; but noticing that he had a restless eye,|| not at all like that of an innocent man, I tested him, saying, "Well, you are indeed a good lawyer, and what you say has all the appearance of right and truth, besides being couched in pleasant language. If you had fallen across any one else, the odds are you would have escaped; but unhappily you have to deal with me, and as you say I am Lung-t'u come to life, why on earth do you attempt to deceive me thus? Make an open confession of your guilt, and I will be as lenient with you as I can." Ch'ên

\* Literally, 'deeper'—a coincidence of idiom by no means uncommon.

† Literally, 'his mourning-brother'; *i.e.*, a relative for whom he would have to wear mourning in case of death.

‡ Judge Pao. See pp. 85, 92.

§ It is believed that the eyes of a wronged man will not close properly after death, until his wrongs have been righted.

|| This fact is notably of service to our own detectives. I have heard it stated that Italian detectives watch rather for a restless movement of the hands.

Wei-tu had not a word to say; but Wang Chüo-t'ing fixed upon him and began as follows:—"Did not we three concert this scheme in the room above the Black Stone fort? Did you not quote the recovery of the bones of Yang Ling Kung of old,\* and bid us steal the body and convey it over the district border? And did you not give five reasons—viz., (1) that we should have to fear no inquest at which absence of wounds might be proved; (2) that there would be no danger of the matter coming to light in another district; (3) that as to the concealment of the body appearances would be against the accused, and that in consequence Ch'ên T'ien-wan, his family, and neighbours would be all put to the question; (4) that no body being forthcoming the presiding official would not be able to close the case, and that we three had only to reap the success of our plot in bribes for a settlement of the case, which the other side would not be able to refuse, and which would soon make us all rich men; (5) and lastly, that after the case should be settled we were to keep our own counsel, and as A hsiung's body would never be forthcoming we ran no risk of future trouble? And then, when we had carried off and buried the corpse, did we not meet together and agree over a cup of wine that it was an excellent scheme, such as neither angel nor devil would detect, and which not even Pao Lung-t'u, if he came to life again, would be able to place in its true light? But what is the use of arguing now? Since you have fallen

\* Alluding to the death of a general who had been sent, under the Sung dynasty, to fight against the Tartars.

across a second Lung-t'u, why not speak out the truth, and not leave us two to bear the brunt alone?" Ch'ên Wei-t'u was still protesting his innocence when I made trial of him again, saying, "Even supposing you were not an accomplice in the plot, still your behaviour has been very suspicious. If these two men were trying to ruin your cousin, how was it you came to be eating and drinking with them on friendly terms at an inn?" "It was by accident," replied Ch'ên Wei-t'u, taken somewhat aback; to which I rejoined, "A single meal might be accidental, but was it accidental that you ate together for several days?" "There are but few eating-houses in the city," said Ch'ên, "and I had no alternative;" upon which I told him that I knew all about the time they had spent together at the inn concocting this plot, adding that persons on bad terms did not usually have so much to say to each other. Ch'ên Wei-tu then began to make some wild statements about his having hoped by fair words to divert the other two from their evil designs against his cousin, but in reply to a question of mine declared that they had not slept in the same room. My next step was to secretly examine Wang Ch'üo-t'ing as to the room they had occupied, its articles of furniture, their position, and so forth; besides summoning the landlord and his son, and eliciting from them under separate examinations that Ch'ên Wei-tu and Wang Ch'üo-t'ing had passed three nights together in the same apartment at their inn. There being now no doubt as to the conspiracy, I put Ch'ên Wei-tu to the torture, and at length got him to

confess that, in consequence of the sale of an ancestral house, he had quarrelled with Ch'ên T'ien-wan, and availed himself of this opportunity to vent his spite. He further admitted having buried A-hsiung's body outside the Black Stone fort, some four or five feet deep in the earth, saying that the spot had been marked by cutting a tree which grew near. I therefore placed him under restraint while I sent Wang Ch'üo-t'ing under the charge of runners to the place indicated, having first communicated with the magistrate of the Ch'ao-yang district and requested an escort of soldiers from the local station. The result was what Ch'ên Wei-tu had stated. A-hsiung's body was found at a depth of four feet, wrapped up in a mat, and on being conveyed to the city was identified by his mother and by Ch'ên T'ien-wan, but my experts who examined it\* failed to find any signs of an unnatural cause of death. Wang Shih-i had now nothing to say, but Ch'ên T'ien-wan wept when he saw Ch'ên Wei-tu, and said, "My brother, what has brought you to this pass? You and I are of the same stock, and there has been no deadly feud between us. When, because of that ancestral property, you were annoyed with me, and declared in your anger that you would sweep away all I had and leave not a hoe behind, I treated your words lightly, never thinking you would attempt to carry out your threat; and had you not now confessed to what you have done, I should not have divined whence this trouble had come upon me. As far as I am concerned,

\* Externally. The stomach is never examined, and even if it were, the Chinese could not analyze its contents.

all is now clear; for you, you have only yourself to thank." "I know it," replied Ch'ên Wei-tu, "we need not discuss that."

I was here advised to report this case in the usual way,\* and by so doing make a great name for myself; but I said, "The P'u-ning district has been suffering from consecutive years of bad harvests. Hardly a month has elapsed since my arrival, and affairs are not yet in a settled state; and although death would inevitably be the punishment of these three body-snatchers, my report would necessarily involve the attendance at the provincial capital of a large number of persons, a misfortune I am not willing to entail upon them merely with a view to establish my own reputation." I therefore ordered the three culprits to receive the full tale of blows allowed by law, and caused a square board to be prepared, on which was written, in large characters, a full account of their crime. This was to be borne aloft in procession, the three men being at the same time taken and exposed at various points in the cangue for the information of the general public. Thus were the people of P'u-ning satisfied.

\* To the higher authorities.

EVIL EFFECTS OF SUPERSTITIOUS  
DOCTRINES.

The people of the Ch'ao-yang district are great on bogies, and love to talk of spirits and Buddhas. The gentry and their wives devote themselves to Ta Tien,\* but the women generally of the neighbourhood flock in crowds to the temples to burn incense and adore Buddha, forming an unbroken string along the road. Hence, much ghostly and supernatural nonsense gets spread about; and hence it was that the *Hou-t'ien* sect came to flourish. I know nothing of the origin of this sect. It was started amongst the Ch'ao-yang people by two men, named Yen and Chou respectively, who said that they had been instructed by a white-bearded Immortal, and who, when an attempt to arrest them was made by a predecessor in office, absconded with their families and remained in concealment. By-and-by, however, they came back, calling themselves the White Lily or the White Aspen sect. I imagine that White Lily was the real designation, the alteration in name being simply made to deceive. Their 'goddess' was Yen's own wife, and she pretended to be able to summon wind and bring down rain, enslave bogies and exorcise spirits, being assisted in her performances by her paramour, a man named Hu, who called

\* A member of the Chinese Pantheon, about whom I know nothing.



himself the Immortal of Pencil Peak. He used to aid in writing out charms, spiriting water, curing diseases, and praying for heirs; and he could enable widows to hold converse with their departed husbands. The whole district was taken in by these people and went quite mad about them, people travelling from afar to worship them as spiritual guides, and with many offerings of money, meats, and wines, enrolling themselves as their humble disciples, until one would have said it was market-day in the neighbourhood. I heard of their doings one day as I was returning from the prefectural city. They had already established themselves in a large building to the north of the district; they had opened a preaching-hall, collected several hundred persons together, and for the two previous days had been availing themselves of the services of some play-actors to sing and perform at their banquets. I immediately sent off constables to arrest them; but the constables were afraid of incurring the displeasure of the spirits and being seized by the soldiers of the Infernal Regions,\* while so much protection was afforded by various families of wealth and position that the guilty parties succeeded in preventing the arrest of a single one of their number. Therefore I proceeded in person to their establishment, knocked at the door, and seized the goddess, whom I subjected to a searching examination as to the whereabouts of her accomplices; but the

\* Fits and other sudden attacks of illness are explained in this way. Sometimes the wrong man is arrested, and his spirit is sent back to earth by the Judge in Purgatory, *i.e.*, he recovers.

interior of the place being as it was a perfect maze of passages ramifying in every direction, when I seized a torch and made my way along, even if I did stumble up against any one, they were gone in a moment before I had time to see where. It was a veritable nest of secret villany, and one which I felt ought to be searched to the last corner. Accordingly, from the goddess's bed in a dark and out-of-the-way chamber, I dragged forth some ten or a dozen men; while out of the Immortal's bedroom I brought a wooden seal of office belonging to the Lady of the Moon, also a copy of their magic ritual, a quantity of soporifics, wigs, clothes, ornaments, etc., etc., of the uses of which I was then totally ignorant. I further made a great effort to secure the person of the Immortal himself; and when his friends and rich supporters saw the game was up, they surrendered him over to justice. At his examination he comported himself in a very singular manner, such being indeed the chief means upon which he relied, besides the soporifics and fine dresses, to deceive the eyes and ears of the public. As to his credulous dupes, male and female, when they heard the name of the Lady of the Moon they would be at first somewhat scared; but by-and-by, seeing that the goddess was certainly a woman, they would begin to regain courage, while the Immortal himself, with his hair dressed out and his face powdered and his skirts fluttering about as he hovered round the goddess, and the two together assumed all the airs and graces of women, soon convinced the spectators that he was really the Lady of the Moon, and quite put them off the scent as to his real sex.

Adjourning now to one of the more remote apartments, there would follow worship of Maitrêya Buddha, accompanied by the recital of some *sûtra*; after which soporific incense would be lighted, and the victims be thrown into a deep sleep. This soporific, or 'soul confuser' as it is otherwise called, makes people feel tired and sleepy; they are recovered by means of a charm and a draught of cold water.\* The promised heirs and the interviews with deceased husbands—these are all supposed to be brought about during the period of trance—for which scandalous impostures the heads of these villains hung up in the streets were scarcely a sufficient punishment. However, reflecting that it would be a great grievance to the people were any of them to find themselves mixed up in such a case just after a bad harvest, and also that among the large number who had become affiliated to this society there would be found many old and respectable families, I determined on a plan which would put an end to the affair without any troublesome *esclandre*. I burnt all the depositions in which names were given, and took no further steps against the persons named. I ordered the goddess and her paramour to receive their full complement of blows (*viz.*, one hundred), and to be punished with the heavy cangue; and, placing them at the *yamên* gate, I let the people rail and curse at them, tear their flesh and break their heads, until they passed together into their boasted Paradise. The husband and some ten others of the gang were placed

\* The use of an anæsthetic prepared from hemp has been known to the Chinese for the past sixteen centuries, at least. See p. 47.

in the cangue, bamboosed, or punished in some way ; and as for the rest, they were allowed to escape with this one more chance to turn over a new leaf. I confiscated the building, destroyed its disgraceful hiding-places, changed the whole appearance of the place, and made it into a literary institution to be dedicated to five famous heroes of literature. I cleansed and purified it from all taint, and on the 1st and 15th of each moon I would, when at leisure, indulge with the scholars of the district in literary recreations. I formed, in fact, a literary club ; and, leasing a plot of ground for cultivation, devoted the returns therefrom to the annual Confucian demonstrations and to the payment of a regular professor. Thus, the true doctrine was caused to flourish, and these supernatural doings to disappear from the scene. The public tone was elevated, and the morality of the place vastly improved.

When the Brigadier-General and the Lieutenant-Governor heard what had been done they very much commended my action, saying : " Had this sect not been rooted out, the evil results would have been dire indeed, and had you reported the case in the usual way, praying for the execution of these criminals, your merit would undoubtedly have been great ; but now, without selfish regard to your own interests, you have shown yourself unwilling to hunt down more victims than necessary, or to expose those doings in such a manner as to lead to the suicide of the persons implicated. Such care for the fair fame of so many people is deserving of all praise."

## A WITNESS FROM THE GRAVE.

The inhabitants of certain villages having joined together in the construction of a dam to collect water for the irrigation of their fields, which water was to be at the disposal of the various members in turn, it chanced that during the droughts of the eighth and ninth months, two of the families interested, by name Chiang and Lo respectively, relying on their superior strength of numbers, proceeded to set at naught the arrangement that had been agreed upon, and, heedless of the fact that on the first of the month the supply in the reservoir belonged to the Yang family, possessed themselves of the water-lift, and began forthwith to appropriate the water to their own use. One of the Yangs, named Hsien-yu, would not stand this, but seizing a knife, rushed upon the intruders, followed by his two brothers, Wên-huan and Shih-hsiang, to prevent them from carrying out their intention. Thereupon, one of the Lo family, named Ming-chu, hurried home and reported to the village elder, Chiang Li-ch'ing, who immediately called out his fellow clansmen Chiang Tzŭ-ch'ien and others, to the number of some forty or fifty men, and away they went armed with spears and clubs, surrounding and attacking the Yangs. This was the signal for one of the latter family, named Hsüo-wên, who saw his uncle and father thus placed in danger, to summon likewise about thirty of their friends to the rescue; and from that moment the fight became general;

but numbers soon began to tell, and Hsien-yu was killed, his brother Shih-hsiang, who had been badly wounded and unable to get away, being carried off by his opponents when they turned and fled after seeing what mischief they had done. As soon as they were safe within their own lines, the Chiangs and Los boasted loudly of their feat, all the time taking particular care to dress Shih-hsiang's wounds for fear he too should die. At that time another official was acting magistrate of the district, and he held an inquest in due form and reported the case, as in duty bound. Before, however, the trial came off, he died, and I was appointed to the post. Many times I examined the accused persons, but not one of them would confess himself to have been the actual murderer; and two of the combatants declared that the large number of persons engaged, with swords and staves flying about in all directions, made it quite impossible to say who struck the fatal blow. The wounded man, too, only knew those who had struck him personally; he could not say who was the first man to inflict a mortal blow upon the deceased. My next step was to examine the accused members of the two clans, Chiang and Lo, one by one, alternately holding out a hope of leniency, attempting to work upon their feelings, frightening them by my demeanour, and flourishing before them the three instruments of torture.\* In fact, I exhausted every means of the kind, without eliciting anything beyond the two words 'Don't know;' not even the merest shadow of a hint. I was thus

\* The cangue, the finger-squeezer, and the ankle-squeezer.

completely nonplussed, until a few nights subsequently, when all was dark and dismal without, and the wind whistled coldly through the almost deserted thoroughfares, I lighted a lamp, and took my seat in the courtroom, summoning to my presence the whole crowd of prosecutors and accused. I then addressed them, saying, "A life for a life is the rule that has come down to us from time immemorial. Do each of you, now, this night pause to reflect how, if some one were to take away your life and not pay the penalty with his own—how you, a wronged shade, would feel in the world below. As it is, you are trusting to the luck of circumstances; not one of you will confess because there is no one who can point either of you out as the guilty man. Such being the case, I have sent a despatch to the Municipal God,\* and have arranged to have the ghost of the murdered Yang Hsien-yu brought back to earth this night during the second watch, to be confronted with you. And I would have you to understand that had you each a hundred tongues, you would not now be able to gloss over your guilt." Thereupon I bade my lictors escort them all to the temple of the Municipal God, where, after the usual ceremonies of gonging and drumming and burning incense, I took my seat in the principal hall, and summoned the spirit of Yang Hsien-yu to rise before me. I then made a feint of addressing a few questions to it, finally turning to the kneeling men, and saying, "Yang Hsien-yu is here; he is desirous of being confronted with you.

\* See p. 44.

Raise your heads and look at him ; see ! there he stands with his hands pressed to his heart, in an attitude of pain, and his clothes dyed red with blood." At this, some of them raised their heads to look, while others only took a furtive peep ; but three of the number, Lo Ming-chu, and Tzŭ-ch'ien and Li-ch'ing of the Chiang family, remained perfectly motionless, as if they had not heard a single word. I therefore called out, in a natural tone of voice, "Ming-chu, come here ! Yang Hsien-yu has arrived, and would have you repay to him that life you took away ; do you still dare to repudiate your debt ?" Ming-chu now began to tremble violently, and for a long time was quite unable to reply ; so I continued as follows :—"Ming-chu, you are ordinarily cunning enough at fence of words ; but now that the ghost of the murdered man is here, you do not venture to open your mouth. This is proof enough for me of your guilt, and unless you confess at once, I will extract the truth from you by torture upon the spot." Ming-chu confessed. He said, "I struck the deceased with a club upon the left temple, but the immediate cause of his death was a spear-thrust inflicted by Tzŭ-ch'ien, with which I have nothing to do." I now called out to Tzŭ-ch'ien to come nearer, and asked him to explain, but he would not confess ; whereupon I said, "Argue the case yourself with the man's spirit ;" and when Tzŭ-ch'ien had looked fixedly for some moments without speaking, I continued, "Don't you see the injured ghost ? It told me that Ming-chu struck a blow on the left temple with a club, and that



you pierced the pit of the stomach with a long blade, causing the body to fall, while you drew your weapon from the wound and the blood gushed out in a stream. Such were the details of that fight; what need for you to prolong the discussion?" "It was so," replied Tzŭ-ch'ien; and I then proceeded to ask if either had aught to complain of in the statements of the spirit? Both men answered in the negative; and to a further question as to the originator of the violent scene, they replied by naming Chiang Li-ch'ing. At this point, I sent these two criminals into a dark part of the temple, and summoning one of the two men who had declared it was impossible to fix the crime upon any one in particular, I said to him, "Yang Hsien-yu is much hurt that you, knowing all the circumstances of his case as you did, should have tried to conceal them to his infinite injury, and his ghost is now disposed to trouble you in consequence. How much did you get to induce you to behave thus?—indeed, I have a good mind to make you answer for his life with your own." The man then disclosed the whole affair in similar terms to those of the two who had just confessed, pleading at the same time that he himself had had nothing to do with the murder, and could not fairly be held responsible. Several of the others were next called, and gave corroborative evidence; but Chiang Li-ch'ing, who was an old man, stuck to his text of 'Don't know,' and being unable to influence him either by physical pain or mental perturbation, I could not succeed in wringing a confession from his lips. However, seeing

that he was in bad health, and standing upon the brink of the grave, I addressed them all, saying, "The case has been clearly made out by overwhelming evidence. Chiang Li-ch'ing was the originator of the *fracas*, and the dead man's ghost will not allow him to live in peace, but will steal away his spirit on the road." I then drew up the sentence in accordance with statute, and forwarded the three men to the higher authorities. Three days subsequently news came that Chiang Li-ch'ing was dead, after which the people of the district had no doubts as to the reality of the manifestation above described.\*

\* I see no reason whatever to disbelieve the literal accuracy of this story in reference to the extraordinary method of procedure here described. The mandarins, themselves stout materialists, do not hesitate to work upon the superstitious fears of the masses in order to accomplish their own ends.

## THE BLANK PETITION.

One day, when I had just taken my seat in the judgment hall, I noticed, outside the second entrance gate, a young woman supporting an old woman. They remained kneeling there for some time, the former holding up over her head a sheet of paper, until at length I sent an attendant to bid them come in. "If you have any plaint to prefer, you should come forward into the hall," cried the attendant to them; "why do you stay kneeling out there?" I then told the attendant to receive their petition, but he informed me the paper was blank. "Never mind," I replied; "women are not acquainted with the etiquette of petitions." "But there is nothing written on it," urged the attendant; "it is only a piece of white paper." However, I ordered him to take it notwithstanding; and when I came to look, such was indeed the case. Beckoning the women towards me, I asked them, saying, "If you have suffered any wrong that you would lay before me, you should write out a plain statement of the facts; why come hither with a blank petition?" The younger woman answered that she could not read or write, that they were very badly off, that the public scribe\* had been intimidated by a certain Li A-mei, and that no one would prepare her petition for her. I therefore instructed a clerk to take

\* Attached to every magistrate's *yamên*, for the special purpose of drawing up petitions and other documents of the kind at a fixed rate.

down the depositions, the old woman stating as follows:—"My maiden name was Chêng. I am eighty-six years of age. This young woman, whose maiden name was Liu, is my widowed daughter-in-law. My deceased son, Li A-tzŭ, was last year driven to commit suicide by the above-mentioned Li A-mei, who, when I was on the point of instituting a prosecution against him, succeeded in getting a number of the influential clansmen to persuade me to stay proceedings, promising to bury my son's body, give me a house, and provide maintenance for myself and this young woman.\* But now, in the wickedness of his heart, he has driven us out of the house, taking away the tiles from the roof and cutting off our supplies, leaving us only the wind for food, the dew for a pillow. In this dire extremity we have come here." "Human life," said I in reply, "is of paramount importance. You were wrong to hush up the case in the way you did, and now nine months have passed away; how can you hope for any redress?" "Li A-mei is behaving thus cruelly to the widow and orphan," answered the younger woman, "because he knows that my husband's death took place last year, and that we have no longer any right to prefer a charge of homicide; that is why he

\* Such is the usual course taken in cases of homicide, accidental or otherwise. If no prosecutor is forthcoming, no steps are taken by the authorities; and from without the circle of those actually interested, no prosecution is likely to spring up. It would be viewed with great disfavour by the officials as well as by the public; and care would be taken to involve the meddling party in such trouble and annoyance and expense as would prove an infallible warning to others against following the example.

ventures to go back upon his agreement. We, too, know full well that as we brought no charge at the time when Li A-mei drove my dead husband to take poison, we can hardly expect to be allowed to do so at this late date. But it is because Li A-mei has destroyed our home and cut off our food, that we can bear it no longer; and we are further unable to obtain redress from the elders of our clan, who shuffle the responsibility from one to another as if no concern of theirs. My aged mother-in-law is like a candle in the storm; my child is a baby in arms; if Heaven does not take pity upon us, Earth will have no resting-place for our bones.”\* To my inquiry as to the whereabouts of Li A-mei, the women told me he lived at a certain place at no great distance from the city; so bidding them wait awhile, I despatched constables with a warrant† for his immediate arrest in order to confront him with his accusers. Before long he arrived, and in reply to my interrogations flatly denied all knowledge of the circumstances described. “I was related to the deceased,” argued Li A-mei, “within the five degrees of mourning,‡ and when last year he was taken ill and died, out of pity for his aged mother and

\* The prospect of a decent burial in some propitiously-chosen grave goes far to reconcile the ordinary Chinaman to his transit from the world of men to the world of spirits.

† A Chinese warrant, to be valid, must bear upon its face a large character in red ink signifying ‘Issue,’ or ‘Let it be sent.’ The same character is noticeable upon the envelopes of official despatches and other similar documents.

‡ Relatives within the first degree wear coarse unhemmed clothes of sackcloth for three years; actually, for twenty-seven months. In the second, hemmed sackcloth of a finer quality, for three or five

infant son, I provided them with the necessities of life. But now the crops have failed, grains of rice are dear as pearls, the sequence of the green and the yellow\* is no more, and I have quite enough to do to take care of myself without looking after others." Then ensued a general wrangle† between the three, but Li A-mei would not yield an inch, finally declaring that these women were never satisfied, and that his former charitable behaviour towards them was not intended to be a permanent thing. "My own wife and children," said he, "are now in a state almost of destitution; how can I assist you?" Examining him further as to Li A-tzŭ's suicide, the hushing up of the case through the intervention of the clan elders, the promise of the house and maintenance, etc., Li A-mei protested that all this was a fiction from beginning to end, put forward by them at the instigation of a lawyer in the hope of getting something out of him, and that the clan elders in question might be summoned to bear him out. I, too, on my part began to think that the story must be a fabrication, only that the women had not the air of impostors, while Li A-mei's eye was restless‡ and his speech flurried, as if he were not straightforward. So I made trial of him thus:—"Li A-mei, you are a bold man to think to trifle with me. I require to hear you say but two words to be able to see

months. In the third, coarse linen for nine months. In the fourth, finer linen for five months. In the fifth, finer linen for three months.

\* Alluding, of course, to the ripening of grain.

† See Note on p. 201.

‡ See Note on p. 153.

straight into your heart;\* how dare you try to deceive me with your impudent falsehoods? You imagine perhaps that because I have but recently come into office I am to be easily taken in; or is it that you have a desire to become acquainted with my three-foot laws?† But come now, if you will confess your guilt, although your crime is a serious one, still I may manage to deal leniently with you; on the other hand, if you do not tell me the truth, I will send for those clan elders and confront you with them, that the water may sink and the stones appear.‡ I shall then give you forty blows for contempt of court to begin with, after which you will be sentenced according to your deserts. Reflect, now, upon what I have said.” Li A-mei thereupon made the following confession:—“Li A-tzŭ was my second cousin once removed. Last year he came to get from me the price of some fields, and because I would not pay him, in a moment of anger he committed suicide by poison out of revenge. § The clan elders advised me to pay the expenses of his funeral; and besides giving deceased’s mother a present of twenty ounces of silver, I handed back to her an old I O U for fifteen ounces more. But

\* The text has ‘heart and liver,’ the liver being regarded as the seat of some of the passions—the heart, of others. The latter is also the centre of intellectual power.

† In ancient times, the laws are said to have been inscribed upon tablets three feet in length.

‡ A common figurative expression, signifying the establishment of the real facts of any case.

§ Knowing the difficulties in which this act would be sure to involve his surviving relative.

I never said anything about supporting the family." "The original agreement," cried out the old woman at this juncture, "was that I was to have a two-roomed house for my own; but now he has pulled off the roof, and we have nowhere to go. Besides, it was arranged by the elders that he was to support us for a year, four months of which period still remain. Is not this shameful behaviour on Li A-mei's part?" "The tiles were blown off by the wind," replied Li A-mei, "and I merely collected them for future use. I will now go and have them put on again, and hand over the house to these women. I will also allow them a picul\* of rice per month until the end of the year, when I shall consider myself free." The two women consented at once to this, and turning to Li A-mei, I told him that in consideration of his speedy confession and readiness to carry out the terms of his agreement I would not be too hard upon him, but would remit the punishments he had incurred by his cruel behaviour and by his attempt to deceive me. Accordingly, I bade him hand over the house and provide the rice, and I let him off his bambooning, thus bringing about a due performance of his duties towards his relatives. All parties were now friends again; the two women went off vastly pleased with the arrangement, and Li A-mei made me a *k'o-t'ou*,† putting his tongue out of his mouth as he turned to leave the hall.‡

\* 133⅓ lbs.

† Knocked his head on the ground.

‡ In joyful astonishment at having got off so easily.



## A DEAD BEGGAR GETS A WIFE AND SON.

The wife of a man named Chêng once came before me to complain that her husband had been driven to commit suicide. She said he had been beadle of a certain village, and that having had some trouble in collecting taxes from a man, named Hsiao, who withheld his title-deed and refused to listen to argument, the latter, on the 13th day of the moon, had collected a number of friends and wrecked the house, beating her husband so severely, that, in despair, he threw himself into the river and was drowned. She further indicated the spot at which the body was to be found; and, accordingly, though suspecting in my heart the truth of her story, I had no alternative but to hold the usual inquest. Her son got the corpse on board a boat and brought it along, and I proceeded forthwith to make an examination. No wounds were visible upon it; still the finger nails were full of mud and sand—a sure proof of suicide \* by drowning—though, at the same time, I felt confident that the persons accused, who were all honestly engaged in trade, would not thus causelessly set upon and beat another man. Further, deceased had been beadle of the place, and those now arraigned on this charge of murder had frequently complained on previous occasions to my predecessor in office, of the depredations of thieves, with a view to recovering their losses from the

\* As distinguished from a murder, when the nails would be free from mud.

beadle ; and I, when I took over the seals, had gone so far as to fix a limit within which the missing articles were to be restored, but without success. Now, there was this story of the attack and suicide ; but the flesh on the face of the dead man was too far decomposed to admit of his identification, and I also thought it rather strange that no one should know anything about an affair which had happened eight days previously, and that there should have been such delay in making the charge. At the same time, as the inquest was held only eight days after death, it remained to be shown why the body should be then so far gone in decomposition as if the man had been dead for a fortnight and more. On my putting this last question to the prosecutrix, her son replied that bodies naturally decompose more rapidly in water than otherwise ; and as for the accused, they none of them seemed to have a word to say for themselves, while mother and son stood there jabbering away with their hempen garments and mourning staves, the one bemoaning the loss of her husband, the other of his father, in such affecting tones as would have drawn tears from the bystanders even had they been of iron or of stone. My own conviction was, however, unfavourable to their case, and I bade them go along home and bury the body themselves. At this there was a general expression of astonishment ; and then I called the accused, and said to them : “Chêng is not dead ; can you not manage to arrest him ?” They all declared they “didn’t know ;” whereupon I railed at them, saying : “What ! you can’t find out the affairs of those who live in the same village, and draw

from the same well as yourselves? This indolent, careless behaviour of yours is perfectly amazing. It's all very well to be callous when other people are concerned; but now that you stand charged with this murder and your own necks are in peril, it being my duty to commit you to prison to pay the penalty, do you mean to tell me you are willing to take the consequences?" The accused men then burst into tears, and implored me to save them; to which I replied: "That is no use. Here's this man Chêng, who was formerly an accomplice of thieves, alarmed by my appointment to office, disappears from the scene. Now, your cities of refuge are confined to some half-dozen or so; and if you separate and go to them in search of the missing man, I have no doubt but that you will find him." Three days passed away, when back one of them came with Chêng, whom he had caught at the city of Hui-lai. They were followed by a large crowd of several thousand persons, who clapped their hands and seemed much amused; and among them were the mother and son, overwhelmed with shame, and grovelling in the dust before me. I made the latter tell me the name of their legal adviser who had egged them on to act thus, and punished all three according to law, to the great delight of the inhabitants of the district. As for the corpse, it was that of a drowned beggar, and no one came forward to claim it. However, as its pretended wife and son had worn sackcloth and carried funeral staves, interring it with every outward demonstration of respect, the beggar's soul must have had a good laugh over the whole affair down in the realms below.

## THE ROBBERS AND THE WIDOW.

When I was acting magistrate of Ch'ao-yang in addition to my own post,\* I was constantly backwards and forwards between the two districts. One day, while passing Shan-mên, I saw a number of herd-boys talking together on the river bank, and overheard the following conversation:—"Shameful indeed! To strip a woman in that way deserves nothing short of death." "And a bride too," continued another, "to be subjected to such an outrage. I wonder how, with nothing on but an old pair of the chair-coolie's trowsers for wedding dress, she managed to get out of her chair, and what the bridegroom thought of the whole affair." "What he thought of it," cried a third, "is not much to the point, since he did not dare to seek any redress at the hands of the authorities; and after all what is there to wonder at in his backwardness?" †

The above remarks astonished me so much that I at once gave orders to stop, and inquired from the herd-boys what it was all about, but they only laughed and ran away. However, I had one of them caught and brought before me, and he stated that what they had been saying was in

\* A Chinese official holding two posts at the same time, as is often the case temporarily, conducts the correspondence of each as if he were two persons, writing from himself as one officer to himself as another. This course prevents confusion in the archives when he comes to relinquish either post to somebody else.

† It is customary in China for people in the streets to talk so loudly that every one can hear what is said.

reference to a band of desperadoes who infested the neighbourhood, and who this very month had attacked a bride on her way to her husband's home, dragged her out of her bridal chair, and stripped her to the skin, making off with the clothes and refusing to leave a single garment for the poor woman to cover herself with; so that when the robbers had gone she was glad enough to put on an old pair of trowsers which one of the chair-coolies very kindly gave her. "Come now," said I, "this is rather too much. A bride would be accompanied by a large escort of her husband's relatives, and you would have me believe that they all remained passive spectators of the scene, and were unable to provide between them anything better in the way of clothes than the chair-coolie's old trowsers! Besides, it is not likely that the husband would let such a matter drop and say no more about it." "The family was poor," replied the herd-boy, "and there was not much of an escort. An appeal to the authorities would not only have failed to bring the perpetrators of this outrage to justice, but would have entailed trouble rather than advantage to the prosecutor. For these robbers stick at nothing, murder and arson included, and no one cares to test the tiger's teeth a second time." I then inquired the name of the husband, but the boy did not know; neither could he tell me the names of any of the robbers, so I took a mental note of what had been said, and when I reached home I sent off secret emissaries to find out all about the affair. This, however, they did not succeed in doing.

Now it was on the 18th of the moon that I took over charge of the Ch'ao-yang district, and on the 19th at daybreak two men named Ch'ên, and a third named Lin, came before me to complain of a robbery with violence committed against them in broad daylight four days previously by a number of robbers who had attacked them with knives and staves and had left them covered with wounds, making off with all their clothes and money. Three of their assailants, A-tsai, A-hsi, and A-sung, they were able to identify, further declaring that everybody in the neighbourhood knew them as most desperate characters whom no one dared either to charge or to arrest, and adding that the wounds inflicted upon them by the above-mentioned robbers had been properly examined by the magistrate previous to my arrival but had not yet healed over. "Since no one dares to arrest them," said I, laughing, "what, may I ask, is the object of your present charge?" "Oh, sir," replied the three complainants all at once, "that was in allusion to the time before your Honour's arrival; we know that such obstruction of the high roads and interference with trade will not be tolerated now." So I sent off runners with all despatch to travel day and night, and on the 22nd day they caught A-sung; and when he was brought before me I confronted him with his three accusers. "It is so," cried he, in a bold tone of voice; "we robbed them of six thousand *cash*, and a lot of clothes of various kinds which are still at A-chi's house intact." He said that the band consisted of eight in all, including himself, and that not daring to return to their

homes they lived in the mountains, showing themselves every now and again, and sleeping in the jungle or on the cliff, with the exception of two of their number who remained with their families as receivers of the plunder of the band. I inquired as to the depredations they had committed, but the man said there were too many for him to recollect; he further declared that none of them had been of a piratical character. Such being the case, I took measures for the arrest of his comrades, and by the 26th of the moon I had six of them, who one and all, without waiting to be bamboosed, fully confirmed the statements of A-sung.\* A couple of them I saw at once to be villains of the deepest dye, and I was prejudiced against them accordingly; and when I demanded of them in particular how many robberies they had committed, they said it was impossible to remember so far back. Their recent performances, however, they ran off quite glibly, and among others was the robbery of a bride at the identical spot mentioned by the herd-boys. I asked what had been taken from her; to which one of them replied that she was a poor person with nothing but silver ear-rings, hair-pins, rings, and a few clothes. He also told me that all the eight were concerned in the robbery, but that only he and three others were the distinguished perpetrators of it. Thereupon I railed at him, saying, "What! a bridal equipage attacked and robbed by less than a hundred and more men, and you

\* The reader is requested to make especial note of this confession without 'torture,' never intended by the writer to meet the barbarian eye.

talking to me about your eights and your fours! Give him a squeeze," I cried, turning to my lictors; but at this point he roared out, "She was a widow, your Honour, going to be married again; where would she get an equipage of a number of persons? I swear that there were only eight of us; and now, when I am telling you the truth on all these matters, why should I lie to you in this one? If I say a hundred or a thousand, it is death all the same and nothing more; can you inflict anything worse on me than that?" "You are a bad lot," I replied, "going about thus and committing highway robberies in broad daylight when the empire is prosperous and tranquil.\* This one theft with violence is enough to consign you to the executioner; but contrary to the rule that men and women shall not even touch each other's hands,† you go and shamefully strip a woman, without regard either to her feelings or to the enduring cause for annoyance you are importing into her married life, and thus render yourselves doubly and trebly deserving of your fate." "We were driven to steal by poverty," said the two men I had singled out; "and now that our career of robbery and violence is to be stopped short, we cannot complain of the justice of our sentence. As to the bride, she was simply a widow without claim to any such title; and being herself without shame,‡ she could

\* That is, when there is less excuse for deeds of the kind.

† As a safeguard of morality. According to the ancient moral code of China, men and women were prohibited from handing things to each other, for fear their hands might touch.

‡ In marrying again, contrary to Chinese feeling on the subject.



not have suffered much at our hands. Her husband did not venture to make a case of it, and there is, therefore, no occasion to say any more about it." "So true it is," said I, laughing, "that a widow should not marry again; for if even a rascally robber like you can treat such a one with contempt, what would a high-principled man of education and refinement think of the matter? We need discuss this question no further; but your other crimes are too many and too heinous for you to escape with life, and you are now specially charged with your last act of violence against the present prosecutors. I shall avoid going through the ordinary formalities of reporting to the higher authorities, since that course usually results in the escape of many through the meshes of the law, the implication of innocent persons, and the death of others on the road; you will simply be cangued for a full period of the sun,\* at the expiration of which your case shall again be considered." I then gave orders for the stolen property to be restored to the lawful owners, and postponed the case against the missing robber until such time as he should be caught and brought to punishment according to law. The other seven were severely bamboed and after being invested with the heavy cangue were placed at the four gates of the city as a warning to all. Three of them, A-sung, A-tsai, and A-hsi, who were

\* It is usual to condemn a man to wear the cangue, or wooden collar, for a full period of one, two, or three moons, *i.e.*, for so many lunar months. A full period of the sun, from its waxing to its waning, is of course a grim joke, and simply means until further orders.

thoroughly hated by the inhabitants of the district, soon found themselves surrounded by large crowds of people gnashing their teeth at them and bitterly reviling them. Some would pelt them with stones and mud; others would burn them with lighted sticks; while the widow's husband, forcing his way through the crowd, lighted a large torch and roasted them by its flames. A-hsi soon bit out his tongue and died, followed shortly by several more of the band, and then the Ch'ao-yang people began to hold up their hands in joy. Two of those remaining fell sick and succumbed, leaving but one, named A-hsün, who dashed his head against the stone steps promising to amend his ways. In my leniency, I had him bamboosed and invested with the lighter cangue, whereupon he managed to escape, cangue and all. He was caught, however, less than two months afterwards on another charge of robbery with violence, and received the reward of his crimes.\*

\* It is probable that this hideous scene was enacted as above described. Lan Lu-chow's share in it is inexcusable from our point of view; still, the actual perpetrators of the cruelties in question were the people, without whose sanction, tacit or expressed, no mandarin would venture even to connive at such an outrageous proceeding. The same holds good in all modern instances of mandarin cruelty. It is not the cruelty of the powerful ruling classes towards the helpless ruled, but the operation of a system intended solely to repress crime, and fully approved by the unanimous voice of the Chinese people.

## THE QUARRELLING BROTHERS.

A man, named Ch'ên, of an old rustic family, had two sons: the elder was called A-ming, and the younger A-ting. As boys, they pursued their studies together; in manhood they worked side by side in the fields, and were very much attached to each other. When they married, they arranged a division of property and lived henceforth apart.\* At their father's death there was a further accession of some seven acres of land, to which both brothers laid claim; and at length, in spite of the endeavours of their relatives and clansmen, the two litigants became involved in a lawsuit. A-ming declared that their father had given the ground to him, and produced in support of his statement the will,† in which the property was bequeathed at the old man's death to the eldest grandson. A-ting also maintained his right to the land, in accordance with the last wishes of their father expressed upon his death-bed. Thereupon I told them they were both in the right, and that it was their father who had been in the wrong, adding that his coffin ought to be brought in as defendant in this case. Neither of them made any reply to this, and I therefore continued:—"The question of the land is a trifling matter; it is the litigation between brothers which is

\* For this family separation they would have been liable, if the father had prosecuted, to a punishment of one hundred blows.

† Nuncupative wills are binding in China, but are only resorted to when the property is small or under pressure of circumstances.

so disgraceful. I cannot give any decision ; but do each of you now stretch forth a foot, and to him who shall bear the pain without a groan when the two feet are squeezed together, the property shall be given. I cannot say whether you will suffer most in the left or the right foot ; therefore do you each choose for yourselves, and stretch forth without compulsion that foot in which you expect to feel no pain." A-ming and A-ting answered that it was all the same as far as pain was concerned which foot might be squeezed ; upon which I remarked, "Ah ! just so ; both your feet would suffer equally. Now your body may be likened to your father, inasmuch as it has precisely the same care for its left foot as your father had for A-ming, the same care for its right foot as your father had for A-ting. And if your body cannot bear to sacrifice one of its feet, how much less could your father bear to sacrifice one of his sons ? But we will go into this at another time." Meanwhile, I bade the attendants bring an iron chain, with which I had the brothers fettered together, myself sealing the lock so that it could not be improperly opened, in order that A-ming and A-ting might be compelled to sit on the same seat, eat side by side, lie down, get up to walk, stop, squat, or stand together, without being able to separate from one another for a single moment. I also placed spies to watch their behaviour and listen to their conversation, all of which was to be duly reported to me. At first they were sulky and would not speak, sitting as well as they could back to back ; but after one or two days they began gradually to come round, and after three or four

days they were face to face heaving sighs, until at length they began to talk. Before long, they were eating and drinking together, and now feeling convinced they were both fully repentant, I asked them if they had either of them any sons of their own. It appeared they had two each, all four between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, and accordingly I gave orders for the boys to be produced. I then addressed A-ming and A-ting, saying, "It was your father's misfortune to have you two sons, the cause of the present complication. Had you two been only one, the property would all have been his, and he would have been happy in the enjoyment of it. But now you two have, with similar bad luck, each of you got two sons; and by-and-by they too will be engaged in quarrelling and seizing property and in deeds of violence without end, to the infinite sorrow of their respective fathers. Therefore I will take counsel for you. Do you each keep one son only. Let A-ming, who is the elder, keep his eldest, and A-ting, the younger, his youngest son, leaving the other two to me. I will order my lictors to place them in the Foundling Hospital,\* to be subsequently handed over to the head of the beggars† as his own children, making him enter into a bond for their safe keeping. With the beggars there will be no property to quarrel about, and we shall avoid like

\* These institutions are common all over China. As a rule, they are mismanaged, and the children die by hundreds.

† There is a beggars' guild in every Chinese town of any size. Its members levy regular contributions from the various shopkeepers, who thus purchase an immunity from molestation.

scenes in the future." At this A-ming and A-ting knocked their heads on the ground before me, imploring for mercy, and promising never to behave so again. I asked them what it was they would not do again; to which A-ming replied that he now saw his error and would resign the land to his younger brother, never again to raise the question of ownership as long as he might live. A-ting, however, protested that he would not accept it, and that he would resign it to A-ming, pledging himself never to go back upon his word. Thereupon, I suggested that they did not mean what they said, and that I could not believe them; both men, however, declared they were in earnest, and each cried out, "If I ever repent these words, may God strike me dead!" "Well," said I, "you seem to be both of one mind; but how about your wives?—they may possibly not agree. Go home and consult them, and come back in three days." The next day, both brothers appeared with their wives and with two elders of their clan, and begged me to stay further proceedings. The wives came forward arm in arm and fell upon the ground in tears before me, promising to quarrel no more and not to take the land. "We fools," said A-ming and A-ting, "were ignorant of our obligations to each other. Now, thanks to your Worship's kindness, we have awaked as from a dream, and are ready to die of shame. Neither of us will have this land, and we pray your Worship to bestow it on some Buddhist temple for the benefit of the priests." "What is this?" I cried; "why you are now more unfilial than ever! You deserve to be bamboosed to

death for your talk about temples and priests.\* Do you mean to say that you are willing to sacrifice this property, acquired by the sweat of your father's brow, to some bald-headed priest, who will step in like the fisherman in the story and carry off both oyster and bird?† And do you think that thus your dead father could hope to rest in peace? No; if neither of you will have the land, then let it be given back to your father himself. Let it supply funds for worship at his tomb, each brother annually taking it in turn to look after the crop produced. Your posterity will have nothing to quarrel about if you adopt this excellent plan." To this the clan elders, the brothers and their wives, all joyfully consented, and went away with every protestation of gratitude and respect. They were much happier together than ever before, and propriety and unselfishness became household words in the mouths of the people round about.

\* Buddhism is not only tolerated, but practised by all classes. A magistrate could not, however, openly recognise anything of the kind from the bench.

† The latter having poked its long bill into an oyster's shell, which immediately closed, thus made both an easy prey to a fisherman who passed by at the moment.

## ALTERING THE REGISTER.

In the prefecture of Ch'ao-chou it had become customary to drag into every case as many persons as possible, with a view to manifest the strength of the prosecution. This end was furthered by a system of forgery of names, intimidation of persons, bribery, concealment of the guilty, and accusation of the innocent ;—all such abuses in fact as put money into the pockets of pettifoggers and yamên runners. I had laid myself out to put a stop to these practices, but I had not fully succeeded, when one day a case of beating to death was brought before me, in which a large number of persons were implicated, among others a man named Chêng A-t'an. He was put down as a native of a certain village, but my runners were quite unable to find him, the villagers declaring that no person of that name lived there. The mother of the deceased informed me, however, that the man was also known as Chêng Ch'i-liang, and an individual of that description was accordingly produced in court. He said his real name was Chêng A-ch'ing, not Chêng A-t'an ; but a brother of the deceased swore it was A-t'ung, and declared himself ready, if it were not so, to suffer the punishment to which A-t'ung would be sentenced if found guilty. It should be mentioned in this connection that the two names A-t'an and A-t'ung are pronounced exactly alike in the local *patois* of the Ch'ao-yang district. Not knowing what to make of all this, I said to Chêng



Ch'i-liang: "The point at issue is whether or not you are mixed up in the murder; whether or not your name is really A-t'ung is a matter of very little consequence." Chêng Ch'i-liang thereupon called heaven to witness, and threw himself down on the earth, crying out that if his name was A-t'ung then he would admit his share in the murder; in reply to which the deceased's brother pointed to the sky, and swore by the sun that if Chêng Ch'i-liang's name was not A-t'ung then he would admit that he himself had been guilty of a false accusation. I here observed that it would be very easy to settle the question, and gave orders that the register should be produced, from which I discovered that Chêng Ch'i-liang's personal name was A-ch'êng, the two characters being written with strokes of uniform thickness, and very much blurred in the formation. "Had I found your name to be A-ch'ing,"\* said I, "there would have been no longer any doubt; but this *ch'êng* character looks very much like an alteration of *t'ung*."† I then examined the registers for the previous five years, and found that all of them contained 'A-ch'êng,' the said characters presenting, however, a suspicious appearance of having been altered. Moreover, his brothers' names were all characters containing the radical *wood* at the left side; and how was it that he alone should differ from the rest in this respect?‡ "You impudent scoundrel!"

\* As he had stated in the first instance.

† The character for *t'ung* might easily be altered to that for *ch'êng*.

‡ 'Ch'êng' has *grain* for its radical instead of *wood*. There is

cried I, striking the table, "your name is A-t'ung, and you have changed it to A-ch'êng with the view of misleading me, and in the belief that I was to be thus misled. You are therefore guilty of this murder; but first tell me by what means and through whose assistance you managed to alter the register." Chêng Ch'i-liang now saw that further concealment would be impossible, and proceeded to acknowledge that his name was really A-t'ung, and that he had got it altered through a clerk in the register office, named Lin. The clerk was produced, and admitted having changed the name for a present of 300 *cash*,\* upon which I ordered him forty blows with the bamboo, to be dismissed from his post, and to be exposed in the cangue for two months. Chêng Ch'i-liang also came in for his share of punishment; but, as regards the murder, I found, upon further examination, that he had really had nothing to do with it. "And now," said I to him, "you see how foolish all your tricks have been. Your home is several miles from the scene of the murder, and an *alibi* has been distinctly proved in your favour. It would have been for me, therefore, to recognise your innocence, and discharge you accordingly; and had you not conspired with my subordinates to alter the register, you would have been at this moment wending your way happily home. It was very clever of you to divine that I should call not only for the current register but for the

generally a similar uniformity in the personal names of brothers; as if, for want of a better analogy, an English father were to make all his sons' names begin with a *B*: Bertram, Benjamin, Baldwin, etc.

\* Say, 1s. 3d.

registers of the past five years, all of which you altered in anticipation ; but you did not foresee that I might be as clever as you, and that you would find it very difficult to get the better of me." At this, all the parties to the case knelt before me, and admitted the accuracy of my decision, while Chêng Ch'i-liang positively hammered his head upon the ground, begging me to release him. "Your crime," I replied, "in thus planning to defeat the ends of justice is a very great one. I have just begun my work of eradicating such abuses from this district, and can by no means overlook your offence.\* You, too, will be exposed in the cangue, that my people may learn from your fate to respect the law." From that moment corrupt practices of this kind were of rarer occurrence, and by strictly forbidding the implication of more than five persons in any case brought before me,† a great reformation was effected.

\* First offences against a new regulation are always severely punished, the effect of this system being considered more deterrent.

† The dread of being called as a witness is only second to that of being arrested as the culprit.

## TORTURE AT AN INN.

In the spring of the year 1728, an official clerk passed through a part of the P'u-ning district. He was accompanied by a man carrying his baggage, and followed by two others, who appeared to be practising for chair-coolies,\* and who were bearing between them a body covered with severe wounds. The party stopped for the night at an inn kept by a man named Ch'iu Hsing; and at daybreak next morning the baggage-porter started off ahead on the road leading to the prefectural city. The bearers of the body were then still asleep, but when later on they were just about to follow with the clerk, the landlord asked what had happened. "Oh, it's only a case of theft," replied the clerk; "we are going on to report to the authorities, the thief himself being too ill to be moved," and accordingly off they went together. The landlord now took a look at the sick man, whom he found to be one of his own clansmen, named A-shuang.† He was unable, however, to elicit any replies to his questions; but by signs and gestures the wounded man gave him to understand that he had been beaten almost to death. Greatly alarmed, the landlord communicated at once with his village elder,‡

\* That is, learning to keep in step and otherwise carry the sedan so as not to inconvenience the rider.

† His surname was of course Ch'iu, this being only his personal name. I have avoided, as much as possible, burdening the page with words unpronounceable by the general reader.

‡ The first step in all cases, civil or criminal.

and the two went off in pursuit, catching up the three men before they had got very far, and bringing them back to the inn. The elder inquired into the matter, and learned that the clerk belonged to the Hai-yang magistracy, and was named Li. That, being on a return journey from the provincial capital, he had hired A-shuang to carry his luggage; that at a certain inn he had one night lost four ounces of silver,\* which A-shuang confessed to having stolen, but would not restore; and that consequently they—namely, himself and the two bearers, were conveying the man to P'u-ning for trial. Now, A-shuang had a brother who was turnkey in the P'u-ning gaol, and the landlord sent at once to summon him; but A-shuang remained quite speechless, and died in the afternoon. An appeal was forthwith made to the magistracy, where the clerk and the two bearers were received into custody, while the case was reported to Ch'ao-yang.† I set off in the middle of the night for P'u-ning, and proceeded to hold the usual inquest, at which it was ascertained that the deceased had a wound on the right temple, inflicted by a wooden staff; that his two thumbs bore marks of having been tied together with cord, and his head of having been compressed in a bamboo hoop, which had been tightened by means of wooden wedges driven in on each side; in addition to which, he was covered with scars of burning

\* Landlords are responsible for thefts committed upon the premises, and often compromise by immediate payment of a portion of the loss.

† In which district the affair had actually taken place.

and flogging with a rattan. "How shameful!" cried I; "who could have been guilty of this disgraceful outrage? Not to mention this yamên clerk, were the perpetrator to be a mandarin even of the highest rank, verily I would make him pay the penalty of this man's life with his own." I then proceeded to take down the depositions, the clerk acknowledging that in consequence of the suspicion which attached to the deceased as purloiner of his money, he had struck him on the temple with a piece of a bedstead, but declaring that the other wounds had all been inflicted by a petty officer and some soldiers of the place. This was corroborated by the two bearers, who added that the landlord of the inn there would support their statements. It here occurred to me that such treatment as that experienced by the deceased was only to be compared with that usually dealt out by soldiers to pirates and highwaymen, so that perhaps after all there might be something in the clerk's story. Just at this moment I also noticed that one of the bearers, whose name was A-wei, had a mark on the thumb of his right hand like those on the deceased, and as he protested it was nothing of the kind, I examined his other thumb, placing them side by side, by which it became evident that he had been tied up in the way popularly known as the 'flying swallow.'\* Looking at his head, I further perceived the mark of a hoop; and on removing his clothes, I saw that his body was likewise

\* Suspended in the air by a cord fastened round the thumbs placed behind the back.

covered with scars of burning and flogging. "This is strange," said I to him; "here you are in much the same plight as A-shuang, except that your wounds are less severe; and yet not only do you keep silent about it, but when questioned, you declare that nothing of the kind has happened to you. My friend, I am thinking it was you that stole the money, and that consequently you dare not open your mouth. Now, tell me at once, who was it inflicted these wounds on you?" "It was that petty officer," answered A-wei. "Why did you not say so before?" I asked him; to which he replied that the clerk had bade him tell nothing for fear of getting mixed up in a capital case. "Come, now," said I, "I cannot believe that the clerk told you to say nothing about what the petty officer did; that is not quite reasonable." "It was only out of compassion for my poverty," replied A-wei, "and the certainty of my starving if once mixed up in an affair of this kind. The loss of his money was his own affair, and he was himself already involved with the petty officer, so that there was no object in dragging me into the case." The above evidence was carefully taken down and forwarded, together with a sketch of the body and a list of the wounds, to the higher authorities for transmission in the usual way. At the same time, I applied for the arrest of the petty officer and the innkeeper,\* the former of whom swore loudly that he was an injured man; but

\* A magistrate's jurisdiction is confined strictly to the limits of his own district.

as the two bearers backed up the clerk's statement, I sent to the camp and requested that the latter might be deprived of his rank, in order to be able to use torture at his examination.\* I also requested to be informed of the name and rank of the officer responsible for this outbreak on the part of the soldiers, with a view to obtaining his impeachment when forwarding the record of the case to the higher authorities; and then, having issued instructions for the witnesses and others to be ready at hand, I gave the matter a dispassionate and patient hearing. The story of the innkeeper last mentioned was a very different version from the others. He stated that the clerk had a nephew, who wandered about practising as a physician and soothsayer, but earning barely enough to keep body and soul together; that the nephew had arrived a day before the clerk at the inn, where they met by accident and both spent the night. That the nephew had begged his uncle for a sum of money to assist him in returning home, and had obtained his uncle's consent; but that next morning the clerk had found himself short four ounces of silver and eighty copper *cash*. The latter had then informed the other visitors at the inn that the money was Government funds; that the local officials would be held responsible; and that unless they aided him to recover the missing silver they would all find themselves involved.

\* No officer of government, from the first to the ninth grade, may be bamboozed unless first deprived of rank. Neither may any holder of the first literary degree, until his diploma shall have been duly cancelled.



At this they were thrown into a great state of consternation, and began to make inquiries among themselves, when the two chair-coolies declared that during the night A-shuang had not slept, but had twice gone in and out of the door. Suspicion was then directed towards A-shuang, but he denied the charge stoutly; whereupon the clerk cried out, that if a man who had stolen government funds was beaten to death it would not matter, and seizing a part of the bedstead, he struck A-shuang with it on both temples. He then bade his nephew and the others tie him up, and the nephew, who was furious at missing his chance of a loan, tied A-shuang's two thumbs together with whipcord and hoisted him up to a beam, after which he proceeded to give him a severe flogging. The by-standers called upon A-shuang to confess, but he would not; and then the clerk and his nephew made a bamboo hoop, which they fitted round his head, tightening it with two wooden wedges to such a degree that the man's eyes nearly started out of their sockets. Still A-shuang would not confess, so they proceeded to burn him in various parts of his body with bunches of lighted grass, upon which he cried out, "A-wei was sleeping on the same bed with me; why should he be allowed to go free?" At this the clerk and his nephew began to suspect A-wei, and without more ado, seized him and subjected him to precisely the same treatment as A-shuang; but finding him equally unwilling to confess, the clerk finally went off to a neighbouring guard-house, the officer in charge of which, seeing that the local authorities were

compromised,\* deputed a petty officer to go to the inn to find out what was the matter. A-shuang, now that his chances of escape were small, began to vapour about his innocence—so much so, that the petty officer was thereby convinced of his guilt, and suggested to the clerk that he should be untied and searched. This was accordingly done, but no money was found, and the petty officer went back to report to his superior, who observed that the case was one for the civil authorities, and urged that it should be immediately laid before the magistrate of P'u-ning. This advice the clerk and his nephew determined to follow, but they had not got far on their way with the accused and the bearers when A-shuang declared that the money was at the inn. The party at once returned to the inn, and searched all over the place, without however finding anything. It was just then beginning to get dark, and the petty officer, who also came back to the inn, fearing lest A-shuang might escape in the night and so further involve the local authorities, gave orders that he should be bound before they went to sleep. By next day A-shuang has become so reduced in consequence of the wounds he had received, that he was quite unable to walk, and the clerk was obliged to promise the two chair-coolies wine and food if they would carry him to the P'u-ning magistracy. Meanwhile, however, the man had died. Such, swore the innkeeper,

\* Responsible as they are in a greater or less degree for all the crimes, and even accidental fires, floods, droughts, &c., which occur within the district.

was the true story of this affair, but as I did not believe him, I gave orders for his fingers to be squeezed, saying, "The clerk and the two bearers have told me all about it; how dare you foist on me this version of your own! How much did the petty officer give you to screen him from punishment and criminate the innocent, eh?" "By the sun in heaven above," cried the innkeeper, "you may squeeze me to death if you will, but no false evidence shall pass my lips. I pray your Worship to investigate this case quietly and closely, until the waters of uncertainty have been drained away and have exposed to view the boulders of truth. Then, if it were not this clerk and his nephew who did that deed, let me pay the penalty with my life." I asked him the names of the clerk and his nephew, but he said he did not know; neither would he admit that there were any soldiers mixed up in the case except the petty officer. I then caused this witness to be confronted with the two bearers,\* whereupon he cursed their evil hearts for thus accusing innocent persons, and warned them that they would inevitably be struck dead in consequence. The two men not having a word to say in their defence, I called out to my lictors to give a squeeze, and then† they acknowledged that the innkeeper's evidence was true. "We foolishly listened," said they, "to the advice of the

\* This is a special feature of every Chinese trial, and one upon which the magistrate greatly depends for assistance in forming his decision. The contradicting parties are often allowed to wrangle away for a quarter of an hour or so without interference.

† That is, before the application of the squeezers.

clerk who spoke to us about the importance of human life, and warned us that we were about to involve ourselves inextricably, being, as he pointed out, too poor to buy a coffin and settle up the affair with the deceased's relatives.\* That, on the other hand, if we three could but fix the soldiers with the murder, the officer of the guard-house would be only too anxious to hush it up, while pacifying deceased's relatives with a present of money to bury the body. Thus, argued the clerk, there would be no case; we should avoid all trouble, the hoop-marks and the burns being attributed to the soldiers, and the weals of the flogging we could say were inflicted by their bow-strings. Now, however, that the officer of the guard-house has made no attempt to hush up the case, and that a report has already been forwarded to the higher authorities, we are unable, in the face of the living testimony of the innkeeper, to conceal the truth any longer. It was the clerk and his nephew who caused the death of A-shuang: the soldiers of the guard-house had nothing whatever to do with the affair." I here recollected that on the occasion of the inquest A-wei had concealed his own wounds, doubtless not without a cause, and it certainly seemed to me that unless the clerk had inflicted these too there would have been no point in his statement that the clerk had told him to say nothing about them. I therefore asked A-wei how it was he had previously stated that he had been maltreated by the petty officer, whereas now

\* As is done in nine cases out of ten of accidental homicide, or of homicide in a brawl, etc.

he declared that the soldiers were in no way concerned. "It was the clerk who did it," replied A-wei, "and he told me to say nothing about it; otherwise, was it likely I should try to screen any one who had behaved towards me in such a manner? I am now telling the truth, and if you were to send me down below without a head, I should still stick to what I have said."\* I then examined the petty officer, but without causing him to waver in his denial, and turned next to the clerk, who cried out in despair: "It is my evil destiny; I have nothing more to say." "Tell me, then," I rejoined, "who actually took A-shuang's life." The clerk acknowledged that he himself was the guilty one, adding—when I asked him how a weak fellow such as he was could overpower a strong man like the deceased, and also if the petty officer had bribed him to admit the charge—that he had been assisted by his nephew, and that he had received no bribe. He further recounted full details of the flogging and burning, corroborating the innkeeper's story word for word, and explaining that he had made no previous

\* The fact that a witness has lied in the course of examination does not, if he subsequently tells the truth, render him liable to very heavy penalties; neither is it held to prejudice his ultimate statements. No oath is ever administered to a Chinese witness; but the deposition which he is made to sign always ends with the formula 'The above is the truth.'

Having occasion, a year or two ago, to request a Japanese Consul to punish a witness of that nationality for perjury in one of Her Majesty's Provincial Courts in China, I was informed that by Japanese law the punishment for perjury, if committed to screen a friend, is ten days' imprisonment or a fine of seventy-five cents, say 2s. 6d.

mention of his nephew, because they were trying to fix the guilt on the soldiers, with a view to settle up the case. He also stated that his nephew's name was A-hsien, his address so-and-so ; that he had no parents or family of his own, but lived from hand to mouth, and that he (the clerk) had not heard anything of him or of his movements since his return from P'u-ning. I accordingly communicated at once with the magistrate of the Haiyang district, and secured the nephew's arrest ; and when he was brought before me, he did not wait for the stimulus of torture to make a clean breast of the whole proceeding as previously narrated by the innkeeper and the clerk. This satisfied me, and I proceeded to close the record, sentencing the clerk to make good A-shuang's life with his own, his nephew to be bamboed and banished to a distance of 3,000 *li*, the petty officer and the innkeeper for not interfering, and the two chair-coolies for giving false evidence at first, to be all four punished with eighty blows of the bamboo. The case was then forwarded to the Prefect and on to the Provincial Judge, who, because of my previous report and its discrepancy with the present finding, returned the record, and instructed me to hold a new trial. Accordingly, I proceeded dispassionately and cautiously to re-investigate the whole matter, and when there was no longer any doubt, I again reported to the higher authorities in the sense of the verdict detailed above, greatly to the indignation of the Judge who wanted the petty officer to be found guilty, so that the military authorities might be impeached for neglecting to keep

their subordinates in order.\* Seeing, however, that I did not alter my verdict he was very angry, and threatened to impeach me for not having decided the case in accordance with what lay before me; to which I replied, "I am not going to save my official rank and position at the expense of an innocent man's life. Better far that I should resign my appointment and retire into the hills, to be what I was before among my books." The Judge thereupon sent for me to the provincial capital to hear the case once more, saying to me, "You think yourself a clever fellow, and pay no heed to your superiors. You treated my return of the record to you with contempt; yet I would ask you where, except at the hands of soldiers, do we find such cruel treatment as in this case. Besides, your first report to me was in one sense, and now you report in another. In what sense am I to report to the Board† that the case has been closed? For these reasons you will hear the case again, and this time be careful." "Your Excellency," I replied, "I am of small capacity and of humble rank; how should I venture to behave in such a manner? I acted in accordance with your Excellency's instructions and reheard the case, but was unable to change the testimony adduced. The people of the sea-board are robbers and can catch robbers, and in

\* The real fact was that there had been a private quarrel between the Judge and the Brigadier-General. The civil and military are not unfrequently at loggerheads in China.

† The Board of Punishments,—one of the six bureaus of government administration at Peking.

the matter of tying, beating, burning, etc., they have nothing to learn from the military. The clerk, himself an employé in a magistrate's yâmen, knew well enough that death would be his punishment, and the nephew needed no torture to cause him to confess readily; such evidence as theirs may be regarded, then, as partaking of the supernatural.\* Human life is at the disposal of Heaven, and where one is taken away another must be given in return; this principle may not be violated by man.† The petty officer, however, is undoubtedly innocent, and to make him suffer death would not only be regarded by him as an unjust sentence but would also be unsatisfactory to the dead man in the shades below.‡ My first report was made upon evidence given in one sense; I closed the record and found a verdict upon evidence elicited in another sense. I cannot say what the Board will do. Dismissal from office is a small matter; to condemn an innocent man to death is a serious affair. It remains therefore for me to await quietly my impeachment. That is all." At this the Judge was so enraged that he was unable to reply, but stamped and raved and cursed, threatening to impeach me without more ado;

\* That is, they were urged to disclose the truth by the influence of the dead man's spirit.

† An idea prevails among the Chinese that the sum total of human life must always be the same, a birth here being compensated by a death there, and *vice versa*.

‡ It is impossible to think that a highly-educated man like Lan Lu-chow had any personal faith in such superstitions. The officials of China do not, however, hesitate to avail themselves of these and similar idle beliefs, when it suits their purpose to do so.



whereupon the attendants advised me to take off my hat and ring my head on the floor in token of submission.\* "I can easily take off my hat," I replied, "but I can't make my head ring; I have never learnt to do that." The Judge was unable to help laughing, though all the time very angry, and again he told me to rehear the case dispassionately without holding to foregone conclusions. It then occurred to me that the limit of time for the settlement of this case had nearly expired, and that if I reheard it first and afterwards sent it on to the Prefect, to be forwarded by him to the Judge, the delay occasioned would be too great; I therefore took the record and all the persons implicated straight to the Prefect's yamên, and proceeded to hold a joint investigation, with the Prefect as president of the court, while I simply sat beside him and listened, my clerk taking down the evidence as it was given. The result was that all concerned stuck closely to what they had before stated, and refused to make the slightest alteration; upon which I handed in the new record with its new questions and answers for the inspection of the Judge. The latter was furious, and pointing out that it was merely the questions and not the answers that had been varied,

\* This in allusion to a curious fact I have never seen noticed by any previous writer. As it is etiquette that mandarins prostrating themselves before the Emperor should make the floor ring with the knocking of their heads, and as this process would be very objectionable on a solid surface of brick or stone, an arrangement has been made by hollowing a portion of the flooring in front of the throne, by which a slight knock will make a considerable noise, and also save the foreheads of the knockers.

accused me of acting towards him as contemptuously as if he had been a dog. "Your Excellency," I replied, "questions emanate from the Court, and may be varied at pleasure; answers are given by the accused, and as it is on those answers that his life or death depends, they may not be varied by the Court. And since evidence may not be varied, it follows that the finding cannot be varied either. Of the rights and wrongs of the present case there can be no possible doubt; I pray your Excellency to hear the case in person, and then if I have been in fault I will take the consequences." The Judge answered that were he to do so and thus put the case in a new light my impeachment would follow as a matter of course; to which I assented and went away. My friends were all in a great state of anxiety on my behalf, but I informed them that I had risen from poverty to the position I then held, and that my official rank was a trifling matter compared with a human life, which latter I was not going to sacrifice in order to curry favour with anybody. Several days afterwards the Judge proceeded to hear the case, and suspecting that the clerk and the others had been bribed to say what they had said, made preparations to torture them. At this the clerk cried out, "I have been employed in a government office too long not to know that he who commits a murder must die; and what, I would ask, would the most enormous bribe advantage me, if I were not to live to enjoy it. Because of my unwillingness to lose four ounces of silver, I caused a man to lose his life; to involve an innocent man now would be only to double the magnitude of my

crime. I am suffering no injustice in this matter, and were you to squeeze me to death I should give no other evidence than I have already given." "As for me," continued the clerk's nephew, "were I not to confess my guilt I should indeed deserve to be put to the question; but as it is I have acknowledged it openly, and I cannot implicate any one else. Of what use, may I ask, would it be to torture me?" "For my part," added the petty officer, "I would die this day under your torture, but I would never pay the penalty of A-shuang's life with mine, and thus wrong his spirit \* in the shades below;" and as all the other witnesses adhered firmly to their former statements the Judge had no alternative but to turn to his secretary and observe with a smile that he could do nothing against such well organised collusion as that. He had no grounds, he said, either for a reversal of the finding or for the application of torture to the parties concerned. His secretary remarked that he did not think it was a case of collusion, and suggested a consultation with His Excellency the Governor, to which the Judge assented, it being thus finally settled that my finding was to be accepted and reported to the Board in due form. Shortly afterwards the clerk and his nephew both died in prison, before they were overtaken by the penalties of the law.

\* By compensating it with any other life than that of the murderer.

## A MEDDLING GOD.

A man named Ch'ên once came before me with an urgent request that I would examine into a case involving the life of his daughter. He went on to say that she was a virtuous young lady, whom he had bestowed in marriage upon a fellow-villager of the name of Lin; that three years had elapsed without there being any issue of this marriage; and that the mother-in-law was a very violent-tempered women, who was always taunting his daughter with the poverty of her former home. "On the 13th of this 9th moon," added he, "I went to visit my daughter, but she had disappeared; whether beaten to death and the body concealed, or sold into some other family, I know not." "Tell me," said I, "had the girl been passing backwards and forwards between the two houses?" to which he replied that she had come home in the 8th moon and had gone back on the 6th of the 9th moon, current, mentioning at the same time a friend named Wang, whom he wished me to *subpœna* as a witness. Accordingly, I got all the parties to the case together for trial, when the mother-in-law began to vociferate loudly that she was an injured woman. "For seventeen years," cried she, "I led the life of a widow. At the expiration of that period I procured a wife for my son, but she was always for going to see her parents. Twice in the 7th moon she went, and again on the 6th of the 8th moon; and although I sent three times to urge her to come back,

she has never returned, for what reason I am unable to say. On the 13th of this moon, her father suddenly appeared at our house and inquired what we had done with his daughter, he having evidently concealed her with the wicked design of marrying her to some one else.\* Upon this, I asked the father on what day his daughter had returned to her husband, whether in a sedan-chair, or on foot, and also who accompanied her; to which he replied that she went back on the 6th, on foot because of their poverty, and accompanied for about half the distance by her younger brother A-chü, adding that the two families lived some three or four miles apart. Here the girl's husband and mother-in-law cried out that she had never returned to them, in proof of which their neighbours† could be called as witnesses. I then examined the above-mentioned friend Wang as to when and where he had met the girl going home? in reply to which he said he had not seen her himself, but had been told of the fact‡ by her young brother A-chü. "About one *li* from my house," continued he, "there is a temple dedicated to the Lord of the Three Hills, and on the 6th of the moon, as I was hoeing

\* And consequently of securing a second supply of the usual wedding presents.

† The evidence of neighbours on the immediate right and left not only forms an invariable portion of every criminal record, but the individuals themselves, according to the system of universal solidarity which prevails, are often punished for an alleged responsibility in matters over which they could have no possible control. Hence the common saying that 'a thousand taels may be spent on a house, but ten thousand won't buy [good] neighbours.'

‡ Hearsay evidence being always freely admitted.

in the garden, I saw A-chü coming from the direction of the temple. He said his father had told him to accompany his sister home, and that she had gone on thitherwards. That is all I know about the matter." In answer to further questions, Wang told me that the girl's father was very poor, and that he lived about three or four *li* from the temple, seven or eight *li* being the distance of the Lin family from the same place. I then called upon Ch'ên to inform me how it was that he, a poor man, at a time when 'rice-grains were as dear as pearls and fire-wood as branches of cassia,' should be for ever having his daughter to stay with him; also, how it was that, after allowing the husband's family to make repeated and fruitless applications for the return of his daughter, he finally sent her back unasked, bidding her brother accompany her half-way only instead of right up to the house; and further, to explain what intention the boy had in speaking of the matter to an outsider like Wang; and how he, the father, could possibly know that such a casual remark had been passed which might stand him in good stead as evidence. Finally, I told him that, in my opinion, the whole thing had been a trick by which he had hoped to dispose of his daughter in a second marriage; but he called Heaven to witness that it was not so, prostrating himself upon the ground, and crying out, "The affection between father and child is very great; they gladly share the coarsest food, and need not be rich to do as we have done. When first my daughter was sent for I was loth to let her go; but feeling afterwards that I had been

wrong, I myself forwarded her to her husband in acknowledgment of my error, as was right. The boy was too young to go far from home; and when half-way, my son-in-law's house would be within easy reach. I wondered to see A-chü return so soon, and suspected that he had not been as far as I told him; but he declared that he had gone past the temple, and said that Wang had seen him. Wang is now brought into the case simply because of this disappearance of the girl. As for me, I am aware that the matrimonial tie is for life, and I should never dare, with this son-in-law alive, to seek another husband for my daughter." A-chü, a boy of just ten years of age, was now called, and deposed to having accompanied his sister as far as the temple, saying in reply to a question that his father told him not to go beyond that point, but to come home and look after the buffalo, leaving his sister to proceed alone. "What!" cried I, in an angry tone; "when your sister has just been married in your own home, do you dare to deceive me thus? If you do not speak out the truth, I will snap one of your fingers off for you!" At this the boy was much frightened and burst out crying, but would not say anything, until at last I began to coax him, and then he declared stoutly in favour of his father's story. "Are there any priests in the temple?" I asked. "No," replied he. "Nor any beggars?" "No." "Any houses near?" "No." "Any trees?" "No." "Any water?" "No." "Nor any neighbours living near your house." "No;" at which point it was quite clear to me that his father was playing an organised game, but as the latter adhered

so obstinately to his story,\* and the boy was so young, I did not see my way to more violent measures. It then occurred to me that I might avail myself of the superstitious fear of spirits, so universal among the people of the south; and accordingly I bade both prosecutor and accused take notice that neither of them had produced any definite evidence, and that the case was in consequence a very troublesome one to decide. "However," I added, "as the road followed by the girl passes in front of the temple, the Lord of the Three Hills will know all about it. Do you therefore wait until I have informed myself by these means of what actually happened before proceeding further." On the next day I summoned Ch'ên to appear before me, and striking the table violently with my hand, I began to abuse him in a loud tone of voice. "You scoundrel!" I said, "you concealed your daughter and married her to another man, and with the aid of some pettifogger you have organised this plot, thinking that you will escape detection. But although man may be deceived, you cannot deceive Heaven. Three feet above your head are the spirits to be found; and now the Lord of the Three Hills has imparted to me the true circumstances of this case. I know then, without more ado, the name and residence of

\* In this sentence is involved the whole principle of Chinese evidence. Torture is only applied when the witness is clearly prevaricating; and it is accepted as a general rule that no criminal telling a lie can be a match for an educated magistrate whose only object is to elicit the truth. Mistakes naturally occur sometimes; but even with our own elaborate procedure the guilty man frequently goes free and the innocent are occasionally made to suffer.



the man to whom you have disposed of your daughter, and how much money you received from him ; and if you do not at once redeem her and return her to her husband, I will assuredly subject you to torture." Ch'ên was too terrified to reply. He prostrated himself before me and knocking his head on the ground begged for mercy. I said he should have mercy when he restored the girl ; and then he confessed that he had been driven by poverty to sell his daughter to a man in a neighbouring district, named Li, from whom he had received three ounces of silver, further promising to part with his buffalo in order to buy her back. Thereupon I ordered thirty severe blows with the bamboo to be inflicted upon him, and placed him in the cangue, on the understanding that he was not to be released until the girl had been restored. Ch'ên forthwith sent off to his wife to buy back their daughter ; but the man who had got her insisted on receiving twice as much as he had paid, and in order to raise the six ounces of silver it became necessary to sell not only the buffalo but also another younger daughter.\* At this juncture, the real husband, Lin, hearing that six ounces of silver had been collected, and vexed by the loss of his wife's reputation, agreed privately with her mother to accept the above-mentioned amount and be free to marry some one else, leaving the man Li in undisturbed possession. Two months, however,

\* The sale of children is forbidden under a penalty of eighty blows, unless they are consenting parties. In times of distress, filial children will offer themselves for sale in the public streets, sooner than see their parents starve.

passed before the matter was finally arranged, and Ch'ên was almost *in extremis* from the effects of wearing the cangue.\* He then said to his wife, "If we had only known that the Lord of the Three Hills was going to meddle in this way, it would have been better to have sold the buffalo and our little daughter long ago. As things are now, it only remains to petition for my release." His wife accordingly came before me with a statement of what had been done, upon which I smiled and let her husband go.

\* This punishment is very severe if the culprit is unable to bribe his gaolers to free him from the collar at night, to wink at his resting it on the wall, and so forth.

## THE EFFICACY OF PIG'S BLOOD.

At a certain village there lived a lawyer, named Ch'en Hsing-t'ai, of a most diabolical character. He lived by litigation; trumping up false charges supported by lying depositions, and filing them in the various courts against any one with whom he happened to be on bad terms. At one time he would accuse people of piracy, at another of highway robbery; whereupon the authorities would arrest those so charged, and would commit them to prison, only to be released after a long imprisonment, and in default of the appearance of a prosecutor,\* by which time their property would be already dissipated and gone. Or he would incite others to bring forward capital charges, which he himself would file on their behalf, and thus stir up the waves of dissension upon a windless plain.†

Now at the above village resided four brothers, named Ts'ai. They were none of them married, and had no homes, but slept at a neighbouring temple, going daily upon the hills, and cutting grass for a livelihood, except on rainy days, when they would steal sweet potatoes from private gardens, or beg from door to door. One day, the eldest, A-tsao, was boiling some potatoes in an earthen pannikin, which cracked with the heat of the fire, and let all the scalding water fall over his

\* See Note on p. 170.

† A curious instance of 'mixed metaphor'—the only one I have ever come across in high-class Chinese literature.

feet.\* In consequence of this he was laid up, and unable to get about and beg; and his sufferings from cold and hunger brought about an illness of which he died. The lawyer, hearing this, thought at once that he had an opening; and in great glee sent for the deceased's three brothers to come to his house, where he entertained them with gruel, finally observing that he had been compassionating their poverty and inability to give their brother a decent burial, but that now they had a fine chance both of getting a good coffin and of extricating themselves from their present state of penury. The brothers inquired how this was to be accomplished, and were informed that all they had to do was to convey the deceased's body, and place it in the house of a certain Ch'ên Hsing-chin; at which they hesitated awhile, until Hsing-tai gave them six pints of rice, when they were so overjoyed at this unexpected windfall that they immediately took the body and placed it at Hsing-chin's door, with a view of getting him into trouble. The latter called Heaven and Earth to witness, and notified the elders of the Ts'ai clan, who met the elders of his own, the Ch'ên clan, at the place where the body was lying, and determined that it was a very disgraceful affair. Two of the three brothers of the deceased then saw that they had been in the wrong; and feeling thoroughly ashamed of themselves, handed over to the elders of the Ch'ên clan the rice that had been given to them by the

\* The poorer classes in the south of China never wear shoes; chair-coolies, however, and weight-carriers in general usually have sandals to protect their feet from the stones.

lawyer, Hsing-t'ai, and begged them to have the body buried. Thus was Hsing-t'ai disappointed, but he did not give up the pursuit. He managed to get hold of the third brother, A-wei, and keeping him at his house, trumped up a formal charge for him of the beating to death of his elder brother and compulsory burial of the body. The plaint stated that Hsing-chin had bought a hut from A-tsao, payment for which he kept on trying to evade, until finally he sent his son, who gave A-tsao such a beating that he died from the effects. That this was followed up by bribery of the elders of deceased's clan, in consequence of which the body was buried under compulsion; and that the village beadle might be called as a witness to the truth of the above statements.

I felt very doubtful in my mind as to the good faith of this charge—handed in, by the way, on the 18th of the previous moon; and on comparing it with a plaint which had been filed only the day before\* by Hsing-chin, with reference to the corpse that had been laid at his door, and the subsequent attempt to intimidate him, on the strength of which a warrant had been already issued—it seemed clear that the accusation of murder was entirely without foundation. However, as I had not heard the case, I did not venture to come to any opinion on its merits. I therefore ordered my constables to

\* It is considered of great importance to be beforehand with one's adversary in filing a charge. If two men have a fight or other cause for magisterial intervention, a popular saying declares that 'he who first files his plaint has won three-tenths of the battle.'

arrest all the parties to the case,\* and waiting until the seals had been opened,† I petitioned [the Prefect] that the corpse might be exhumed, and an inquest held upon it.‡ Shortly afterwards I went to the provincial capital on official business; and meanwhile A-wei filed a petition in the Prefect's *yamên* that the inquest might be held by the magistrate of a neighbouring district, Hsing-chin also filing his petition in a similar manner. At this behaviour on the part of Ch'ên Hsing-t'ai, the elders of the Ch'ên clan were very angry, and likewise proceeded to file a joint petition in the Prefect's Court, upon which an order was made that the case was to be heard by the proper magistrate. Hsing-t'ai, the lawyer, was so outraged at this that, in company with a number of his armed clansmen and several professional boxers, he proceeded to the house of one of the above-mentioned elders, dragged him and another of the elders out, and gave them such a terrible beating that they were all covered with wounds, the left arm of the former being broken by a severe blow from a stick. The assailants then ransacked the house, carrying off all that they could lay their hands on, Hsing-t'ai appearing to forget that the objects of his attack were his own relatives in a higher degree. Their next move was to get on board a boat, and lie in ambush for Ch'ên Hsing-chin at a

\* This would include witnesses and probably next-door neighbours. See Note on p. 211.

† Official business of all kinds is nominally suspended for one month at the New Year, and all seals of office are put away.

‡ With a view to discover, on Chinese principles of medical jurisprudence, the immediate cause of death.

certain bridge, where they intercepted him, stripped off his clothes, beat him, and finally took from him 1,500 *cash*, besides some fish and other things. Hsing-chin escaped, naked as he was, and reported to the beadle what had happened, but before the latter could reach the scene of the assault, the boat in which the assailants were had already reached mid-stream.

When I returned from the capital, I ordered my runners to bring the parties to the case up for trial. Hsing-t'ai, however, seemed afraid to show himself, for he sent his mother with a plaint against one of his own clan elders, accusing the latter of having surrounded and sacked their house, with a view of course to divert attention from his own misdeeds of this description, and meanwhile kept so carefully out of sight that it was some time before he was arrested and produced in court. A-wei, his *protégé*, still adhered to his former statement; whereupon I summoned the other two brothers, and they, after an appeal on my part to their sense of right, admitted that the eldest brother had died from natural causes, and told me the whole story of their dealings with Hsing-t'ai. I replied that they deserved well for having thus spoken out the truth; at which juncture Hsing-t'ai broke in with many asseverations to the contrary, declaring that these two witnesses had been kept by Hsing-chin at his house for the especial purpose of giving such evidence. Hsing-chin himself knocked his head on the ground and swore that this was not so; and I then observed, "The point at issue is easily decided. Those two brothers have a vegetable look upon their faces—half

green and half yellow. They are evidently in great stress for want of food, and have apparently found no one to provide them therewith. Now I should like to know how it is that A-wei, their brother, who has been living and sleeping and eating with them at the temple, has alone pink-and-white cheeks as if he had not suffered from either cold or hunger for many months past. It is clear that he has been battenning at Hsing-t'ai's expense." One of the other brothers here observed that he had not seen A-wei for six months past; that A-wei had been brought to the trial from Hsing-t'ai's house; and if that did not mean that he had been living there, he should like to know what it did mean. A-wei now saw that deceit was of no more avail, and proceeded to confess the details of the conspiracy, adding some story about Hsing-t'ai having cheated one of his clan elders out of three strings of *cash*, 200 of which had been given to the beadle as his share. I then asked what cause of feud there was between them; to which A-wei replied that there was none in particular, but that years before his father had sold a piece of ground to Hsing-chin, and that recently Hsing-t'ai had been anxious to acquire this same piece, and in consequence of Hsing-chin's refusal to give up his purchase had got a spite against him. A-wei added that Hsing-t'ai's motive was to get money by intimidation, his spite being quite a secondary consideration. This was followed by the evidence of Hsing-t'ai's own clan elders as to the story of the six pints of rice and their burial of the elder brother's body, and also by the evidence of a large



number of witnesses on the other side, all of which went to show that Hsing-t'ai was an unprincipled fellow who was always stirring up mischief to the detriment of others, and that, as the witnesses said, he had "no right to live in the Yao-and-Shun days they were then enjoying,\* but should suffer the utmost penalty of the law in order to tranquillise the surrounding neighbourhood." Hsing-t'ai himself was now without a word to say; he bent his head and obviated any recourse to violence by a full and open confession of his guilt. When he had concluded, I expressed my astonishment at such utter villany, and ordered my lictors to give him forty blows on the spot, after which he was cast into prison and the stolen property recovered; and I was just on the point of forwarding him and his case to the higher authorities in accordance with statute, when he managed to escape, and forthwith filed in the Taot'ai's court a petition, written in blood,† charging me with concealment of a highway robbery with violence that had been committed against him in my district.‡ Thereupon the Taot'ai made an order of court, instructing the Hai-yang magistrate to hear the charge, from which date Hsing-

\* Yao and Shun were two ancient Emperors, whose reigns are generally spoken of as China's 'golden age.' The introduction of the term here was a compliment to Lan Lu-chow's beneficent rule.

† This is one of the last resources of a man who is otherwise unable to secure justice.

‡ Alluding to the responsibility which always attaches to mandarins for crimes, and still more for accidents, such as fires and floods, which occur within their jurisdiction.

t'ai remained hanging on to the Taot'ai's\* yamên, satisfied with what he had accomplished, and content to stay away from the district city. However, as I had before me a capital charge against him, I did not venture to allow any delay to intervene, but caused the constables commissioned to arrest him to be severely bamboosed,† the result being that he was shortly caught at the west gate of the Prefectural city; and on his steadily refusing to yield up the stolen property, I forthwith threw him into prison.

Hsing-t'ai's next move was to send his father with a petition to the Hai-yang magistrate, praying that the charge against me might be heard; also on several occasions to the Taot'ai's yamên, where he made a public appeal for the redress of his grievances.‡ A

\* The Taot'ai is a high official placed in charge of what has been called a 'circuit' of Prefectures.

† In accordance with the provisions of the Code.

‡ The *ultima ratio* of a suitor with a grievance. It was once described by Mr. DAVENPORT, when officiating as H.M. Consul at Shanghai, as follows:— 'A recognised procedure among the Chinese is what is called "Han Yüan"—i.e., the aggrieved suitors, with as many friends as they can gather, surround the magistrate's yamên, and howl as loud as they can for days and nights. . . . Sometimes they go further, and pull down the magistrate's court-house over his ears.' The concluding sentence is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the real relationship existing between the Chinese people and their rulers. Instances of the kind are not by any means unknown. The Hongkong *China Mail* contained only last autumn (1880) a graphic account of a struggle between the mandarins and the pork-butchers of Ch'ung-k'ing, in the province of Szechuen, relative to the imposition of an extra tax on each pig killed. The latter closed their shops, and took measures for preventing the sale of pork either by or to any

great deal of official correspondence ensued; and at length, seeing that Hsing-t'ai was unscrupulously obstinate beyond all measure, I summoned him before me and bade him state when he had suffered from a highway robbery; what case I, the magistrate, had concealed from the higher authorities, as lyingly set forth by him in his petition to the Taot'ai. To this he replied that he had really been beaten by Hsing-chin, but that had he not made any exaggerated statements in his petition, the higher authorities would not have taken up his case, adding that he supposed he should now have to suffer for it. I asked him what he meant by writing his petition in blood; and he explained that it was done with a view to bring the matter more forcibly to the

person unpledged to support their cause. The military were called out, and four official pork-stalls were opened, but the meat exposed there rotted for want of purchasers. Ultimately, 'the pork-butchers gained the day, . . . and the proper guarantees were given not to raise the tax.' The Chinese are the most law-abiding people on the face of the globe; but the laws by which they will abide must be laws of which they approve.

Another case was given in the *China Mail* during July, 1880. A number of graduates had committed a violent assault upon some shopkeepers in the large city of Shiu-kwan, and several of them had been imprisoned in consequence. 'In the course of the morning a large meeting of the students was held in a college adjoining the Examination Hall. The District Magistrate went out to confer with them. The students cracked his gongs and shattered his chair with showers of stones, and then prodded him with their fans and umbrellas, and bespattered him with dirt as his followers tried to carry him away on their shoulders. He was quite seriously hurt.' Here, however, the graduates were in the wrong from the beginning. The case is only quoted as one instance among hundreds of the treatment experienced by an unpopular or unsuccessful mandarin at the hands of a Chinese mob.

notice of the Taot'ai and to enlist his sympathies in the cause. "Where did you get your blood?" I rejoined; "a stolen chicken perhaps, eh?" "No, your Honour," replied Hsing-t'ai, smiling; "it was pig's blood. I bought that day half-a-pound of pig's blood to make soup for my breakfast, and I kept some in a cup for inditing my petition. I told everybody else, however, that I got the blood by pricking my own finger. It was only a desperate effort to escape the punishment that was fast coming upon me, and not designed for the purpose of otherwise making trouble." "I will be lenient with you," I said, "if you will restore the stolen property;" to which Hsing-t'ai replied that his father had received it all, and that he had written to him to hand it over. The father, however, had gone off and lay concealed in the Prefectural city, and it only remained to invite the co-operation of the Hai-yang magistrate and try to get him arrested. Meanwhile, as regarded the false charges of murder and highway robbery filed by Hsing-t'ai, I appealed to the higher authorities for instructions whether I should hand over Hsing-t'ai to the Hai-yang magistrate for the latter to try the charge against me, or whether I should arraign him myself and punish him severely on the earlier charge standing against his name in my court; but before any answer had been received I had already ceased to be magistrate. It was that blood-written petition which gave rise to months of correspondence and caused so much difficulty in dealing with this case, enabling Hsing-t'ai to swallow the ship and slip through the net. For the acting

magistrate let him off with a bambooning and a month in the cangue, besides recovering from him the 3,000 *cash*, which were confiscated and placed in the official treasury. That was all the punishment Hsing-t'ai got ; at which he clapped his hands, and laughingly declared that the efficacy of pig's blood was great.

## TWO TROUBLESOME COFFINS.

On the skirts of a village situated to the west of the district city of Ch'ao-yang, in a patch of high grass, quietly reposed two coffins which had lain there, exposed to sun and dew, no one could tell how many tens or hundreds of years. Suddenly, one morning, there began a great burning of incense and hurrying thither of the people, as if they had been flocking to a market, the cause of the excitement being quite unknown to me. I then heard from one of the natives\* that a certain family had lost a little boy of eight years of age, and that his father and mother, after hunting for him in every direction, had found him lying down beside the two coffins above-mentioned. When, however, they spoke to him, he did not answer; neither was he able to stand when raised up; from which they inferred that the coffins were exercising a malign influence over the boy, and accordingly they set to work to intercede with prayers and supplications for the safety of their child. Thereupon, the little fellow waked up and went off home with his parents, who offered up sacrifices of wine and meat, and burnt incense and paper money in gratitude that their prayers had been answered.

Now, when the people of the neighbourhood saw what had taken place, they concluded at once that it actually was a spiritual manifestation, and one or two of the

\* A magistrate can never be a 'native' of the province in which he holds office.

more mischievously-inclined embellished the story by declaring that these old coffins could speak—that they could foretell future events, bestow happiness, banish misfortune, and answer prayers; thereby causing the villagers to worship them precisely in the same manner as their ordinary gods. Some one said the dead occupants belonged to the Kuo family, and so the people began to talk of them as Mr. and Mrs. Kuo, to which by-and-by the title of ‘saint’ was added. Far and wide spread the fame of this sainted pair. From city and hamlet, men and women, old and young, flocked to them with prayers and supplications; fishermen, fowlers, holders of scarce merchandise,\* women in want of sons, men in search of fame or wealth, doctors, schemers, parents in want of good husbands and wives for their children, litigants, prisoners desirous of getting free,† persons looking out for graves or estates, and gamblers eager to win on their ventures—all such applicants as these made their way to the coffins’ side, where, falling on their knees, they would invoke the aid of the departed saints with much burning of incense and paper money as a guarantee of good faith. And then, when their desires had been fulfilled, there would be sacrifices of wine and meat in token of gratitude for favours received.

\* Speculating on the rise in market prices.

† Prisoners are often to be seen outside their prisons, employed either in some handicraft or in begging from the passers-by, and secured as a rule by fetters or a chain. But if good security is forthcoming, they are allowed, when merely awaiting trial, to go free. Bail is personal in China. If the bailee absconds, the bailer has to take his place.

This went on until at length two old women found it worth while to come and keep the place properly swept, look after the incense, the implements of divination,\* and the interpretation of dreams, realising for these services no less than several thousand *cash* a day. Meanwhile, the *gobemouches* of the country round would think nothing of coming a hundred and more *li* to consult the oracle—men and women, women and men, young and old, in one continual stream from morning to night and from night to morning. Young rascals of the pickpocket class would hide themselves about the city wall and steal the women's head-ornaments and ear-rings; or they would get playing tricks with the girls, and indulging in all kinds of rowdy behaviour, to the great scandal of respectable people. At length, on my return from P'u-ning to Ch'ao-yang, a number of the *literati* took the matter up, and laid a formal plaint, in which they spoke of 'incense burning on the highway and the trysting-place at Mulberry Grove.† "Ah!" said I to the deputation, "you gentlemen are indeed zealous in the cause of right. Were all our scholars to show themselves equally careful of the public morals, the welfare of the people would no longer be a subject for anxiety. The Ch'ao-yang populace is greedy of marvels, and there seems to be no lack of such manifestations;

\* Two pieces of wood, flat on one side and round on the other, which are thrown into the air, and from the fall of which good or bad results are predicted.

† *Sc.* superstition and fornication. The latter is a figurative expression, taken from the *Book of Poetry*.



but I am astonished that after what happened to 'the goddess'\* a couple of rotten old coffins should be credited with supernatural attributes. What possible knowledge can these things have, exposed for years to sun and dew in an out-of-the-way bit of a copse, at the mercy of wind, rain, heat, and dust? Why, if they had not influence enough with their descendants to secure a mound of earth and a little attention, where, I should like to know, do they now get their power of walking up hills and across water, of mixing with ordinary mortals, assisting them in lawsuits or in the acquisition of wealth with even the minimum chances of success? Truly, the folly of their dupes is pitiable indeed! Prosperity and misfortune are matters of destiny; and no spiritual being, however clear-sighted or well-meaning, would venture to arrogate to itself one fraction of the merit which appertains to Heaven alone! What, then, are these skeletons that we should tolerate their mischievous tricks? But they shall have their deserts, and so shall all those who lend countenance to such deception; and no mercy shall be shown."

Accordingly, I at once issued a notice warning people to avoid the spot; and summoning the beadle and village elders, I inquired if there were any descendants of the dead Kuo and his wife, adding that if within three days the coffins were not buried the beadle and the elders were to provide faggots and accompany me to the place, when, for the crime of lying there and deceiving persons

\* See pp. 158-162.

as to their possession of any spiritualistic power, I would administer to each coffin two hundred blows, and then, having consumed them with fire, would cast the ashes into the river and thus rid the neighbourhood of an uncanny pest. Upon this, the descendants of the deceased persons, who lived at no great distance and followed the trade of sandal-makers, were greatly alarmed, and set to work without delay to remove and bury the coffins; after which the spiritualistic mania died out.

## EDUCATION IN CHINA.\*

It is doubtless widely known among English readers that book-learning has always been held in high estimation by the Chinese, though few persons have much opportunity of travelling beyond the terms of this general proposition, and of acquiring clear-cut notions as to what the book-learning of the Chinese actually amounts to, when expressed in equivalents familiar to their own range of thought. Speaking broadly, an apt parallel is ready to hand, in the strict classical curriculum of our forefathers, before modern languages and the physical sciences had successfully asserted their claims to at least an equal place, in the education of Englishmen, with the literatures of Greece and Rome. It is a system of mental culture by which the faculties of memory, ratiocination, and judgment, are largely developed, and rendered more capable of application to the ordinary problems of life. No enlightened teacher of Greek or Latin, now, so far over-estimates the functions of these languages, or of the literatures belonging to them, in the training of youth, as to believe that their influence extends much beyond

\* Reprinted from *Time*.

this point; but the Chinese have not yet attained to similar enlightenment in the almost identical scheme of education which prevails in China to the exclusion of any other element. They have one beaten track, along which each and every student must necessarily pursue his way, over precisely the same ground, in each and every case. Nothing is optional; and consequently there are no alternative courses adapted to individual tastes or abilities. The dogmas—ethical, political, and social—of their early sages, are, one and all, without reference to the changed surroundings of modern times, regarded as some divine legacy of wisdom, infallible in doctrine, and not to be altered or improved upon by the degenerate race of to-day. It is true that Mencius, ‘the second,’ as he is called, of China’s immortals, expressly warned his countrymen that they should strive to live in harmony with the spirit of the age in which they might chance to be born; but this valuable precept has always been carefully overlooked, and greater prominence given to others, couched in a less liberal and less practical tone. And so it is that the Chinese are now, in the hurry and excitement of this nineteenth century, pretty much where they were hundreds upon hundreds of years ago. A movement is indeed now being made in the right direction; but the Chinese move slowly, and the impulse has moreover arisen, not from any internal conviction of its desirability, but from a forced contact with Western nations. Schools, for the study of science and foreign languages, have either been formed, or are in course of formation, at various great centres of population;

and so far so good, though as yet no way is open through these channels to the posts of real honour and emolument which the Government of China has to bestow. In this respect, the ancient landmarks still remain unchanged; and, before they pass away, 'and the waves come upon them at last,' it may not be uninteresting to record what is the actual state of education among the Chinese at this late date in the world's history.

The birth of a son is an advent always accompanied by much rejoicing in China, as elsewhere. All the more so, however, if the family in question belongs to the lettered section of Chinese society. The boy will follow in the steps of his ancestors, and there is no saying what he may not achieve in after life for them as well as for himself!\* Within a few days of birth his parents dub him with some pet name, by which he is generally known until he goes to school; he passes through the arduous process of teething, and, what is more dangerous still, the blooming-time of his 'heavenly flowers'—*i.e.*, the small-pox. Being breeched, he plays about the courtyards of the family manse with the slave-girls of the establishment, or out in the streets and lanes, with small crowds of contemporary *gamins*. His father—'the venerable severe one'—watches him with devoted fondness, and too often aids him in overloading his stomach with sweeties and indigestible cakes; while his mother—'the venerable compassionate one'—makes frequent visits to the neighbouring temple, and offers

\* Posthumous honours are frequently conferred upon the parents and grandparents of distinguished men.

up many a prayer and sacrifice for the future career of her son. Until about seven years of age, the life of a Chinese boy is an intellectual blank; then comes a mighty change. He must either be sent to school, or a tutor must be engaged for him at home. In any case, he must forthwith enter upon that course of study by which alone the worldly successes most prized by the Chinese are to be obtained. Up to this moment he has learned absolutely nothing; save, perhaps, to be respectful to his seniors, and not to step on written paper, or even to let it fall to the ground. But now he has a tedious task before him, to accomplish which we will suppose that he goes to the village school, and thither we will follow his steps, lighter at first starting than a few months later on.

Here he is formally presented to the master, to whom he usually conveys some trifling present over and above the wretched monthly fee with which the latter is remunerated for his services. He prostrates himself before the image of Confucius, the recognised fountain of all knowledge; and then the schoolmaster proceeds to choose for him an appropriate personal name to be retained in after life, after which he settles down to his allotted task. For the past six centuries this initiatory task has always been the same—the committal to memory of a tiny primer, called the *Three Character Classic*, containing miscellaneous information on a variety of subjects compressed into the narrowest possible compass. Each character, as it occurs, is associated in the mind of the learner rather with its sound than with its meaning in

the sentence where it stands ; since some portions of this primer, occasionally simple enough, would be quite unintelligible to a child. The opening verses, for instance:—

Man at birth ;  
By nature good ;  
In instinct similar ;  
In practice diverging.

This would of course be a hard nut to crack for a totally uneducated boy of six-and-a-half ; further on, however, easier subjects are treated, and the pupil is taught that the three great lights are the sun, moon, and stars, and that the six domestic animals are the horse, ox, sheep, pig, dog, and fowl. A little history, biography, and so forth, make up the sum and substance of the work, of which so many lines, or more correctly, 'columns,' are daily committed to memory. While learning his task, the boy hums the words aloud in a noisy sing-song voice, together with all his schoolfellows at the same time, the result being an almost unbearable din ; in the midst of which the master will calmly hear one of them repeat his lesson in a similar but louder tone, while the pupil stands with his back to the magisterial desk, to guard against any chance of furtive assistance from the book.

When thoroughly familiar with the *Three Character Classic*—so called, by the way, because arranged in columns of three characters to each—our youth will have familiarised himself with the shapes and sounds, and partially with the meanings, of something like 400 separate characters ; and he will now be considered

sufficiently advanced to take the second set step upon the road to knowledge, and to proceed to commit to memory in like manner the *Thousand Character Essay*. This singular piece of composition was the production of a man who is said to have been supplied in prison with 1000 different characters jumbled together, and to have been ordered to make out of them a poem. He accomplished the feat in a single night, but his hair turned white with the effort. The poem consists of 250 columns of four characters to each. Its subjects are varied, and, from the nature of the case, inconsequent; as witness the following specimen:—

Like arrows, years fly swiftly by;  
The sun shines brightly in the sky;  
The starry firmament goes round;  
The changing moon is constant found;  
The heat remains, the fuel spent;—  
Be then on time to come intent,  
A dignity of mien maintain,  
As if within some sacred fane.  
Adjust your dress with equal care  
For private as for public wear;  
For all men love to crack a joke  
At ignorant or vulgar folk.  
Four words which give a sentence force  
Are *really, so, indeed, of course*.

Here, again, the chief object is to store the pupil's memory with the shapes and sounds of a large number of written symbols; and by the time that the *Thousand Character Essay* has been mastered, it follows that 1,000 new characters will have been added to the boy's stock-in-trade; besides which, he will have acquired a



knowledge of a very useful cardinal series of numbers from 1 to 1,000, these characters being constantly employed as such in every department of life.

The next step is an important one, analogous to the old school transition from *Delectus* to *Cæsar*—from the elementary to the advanced; and it is generally with renewed interest that the budding student opens at the first page of *The Four Books*, a collection of writings which form the leading feature in the great competitive tests, to which he will hereafter be subjected. Of these a brief notice will be necessary, specimen quotations from each being reserved, until we come to speak of papers actually set at one of the public examinations.

I. *The Great Learning*.—A short treatise on government, dating from the Confucian period, though its actual author is unknown. The above is Dr. Legge's rendering of the title, which might be more poetically translated by *The Book of Wisdom*. To quote its own words: 'What the Book of Wisdom teaches is—to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.'

II. *The Doctrine of the Mean*.—A short philosophical treatise, ascribed to the grandson of Confucius, in which the ruling motives of human conduct are traced from their psychological source.

III. *The Discourses* [of Confucius].—This work, compiled a generation or so after the sage's death, is divided into twenty sections, with partial reference to the subject-matter of each, and, in general plan, is the counterpart of the Christian Gospels. It is the source of almost all

our authoritative information as to the life and doctrines of Confucius. From it we learn what he thought and what he taught; and one section is even devoted to the details of his private and personal deportment.

IV. This last and longest of the *Four Books* is nearly identical in character with the preceding, except that it is Mencius whose teachings are here embalmed. His conversations with various princes and others are fully recorded, and resolve many difficult questions of ethics and political economy. He maintained, *à outrance*, the doctrine enunciated in the first lines of the *Three Character Classic*—in which, of course, it is simply a quotation—namely, that the nature of man is originally good, and that it becomes evil only from friction with an evil world. His great antagonist, Kao, argued that the nature of man was like water, which, having no inherent tendencies of its own, flows indifferently hither and thither, according as a passage is opened to it. Upon which Mencius triumphantly replied, "Water will, indeed, flow indifferently to the east or to the west; but will it flow indifferently up or down? The tendency of man's nature to good, is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards."

These *Four Books* are now committed, one by one, to memory, in precisely the same way as the two foregoing primers, anything like explanation or consultation of the authorised commentary being postponed, until some progress has been made in the arduous task of learning by heart. Meanwhile the boy is taught to write, shaping

his characters in accordance with accepted canons of elegance and finish, by means of a copy placed under a semi-transparent sheet of paper, and traced over and over, until the pupil acquires some freedom of manipulation, and is able to imitate from sight. The proper way to hold the camel's-hair brush, used as a pen, and the method of rubbing ink on the ink-slab to a due consistency, equally come in for a share of the pupil's attention during the excessively long school hours—9 a.m. to 6 p.m.—which are customary in China. By-and-by, too, he is initiated into the art of essay-writing, perhaps the most practically important, and, at the same time, most unpractical part of the Chinese educational scheme. It is on his proficiency in this respect that the student's ultimate success for the most part depends. A candidate, receiving a given theme, is not at liberty to sit down and write an essay in the terms or sequence which unassisted fancy may dictate. He must abide by fixed rules; introducing the subject in so many balanced sentences, developing it in so many more; summing up his arguments, and finally reaching the conclusion, according to received principles of composition. And so also with poems. These are invariably upon the same model—a stated number of characters to each line, arbitrary rules of rhyme, trite similes, and forced allusions to the past. The bookshops of Chinese cities are flooded with collections of essays and poems by famous authors of all ages, and these are carefully studied by intending competitors, in the hope of borrowing therefrom something of their vigour and refinement

of style. Successful and even unsuccessful candidates often print their literary efforts in this direction, at any rate for private circulation; and, good, bad, or indifferent, these are always much admired by the writers themselves. Hence a curious and caustic saying, that men generally prefer 'their own compositions, but other people's wives.'

At this point the youth's name is entered at the bureau of the local magistrate; to accomplish which it is, however, first incumbent upon himself to show that his genealogical record has been unsoiled through the three preceding generations of father, grandfather, and great grandfather: in the sense that none of these have been engaged in certain tabooed occupations, such as acting, holding the post of executioner, and some other menial offices in government employ. His surname and personal name are then carefully registered, and a note is appended as to his physical appearance, with a view to establish identity in cases of doubt. The first and second examinations to which our new undergraduate is admitted are merely tests leading on to the third, which, in point of fact, is really the first of the series, being that at which the bachelor's degree is conferred. This last is held twice in every three years, at the prefectural cities of each province, by a resident provincial official of high rank, who is usually spoken of as the Literary Chancellor. It occupies only one day. The candidates assemble at the place of examination before dawn, and are provided with seats and paper. They are previously searched on entering, but often find means to elude the vigilance of

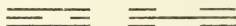
their searchers; and instead of having the *Four Books* at their fingers' ends, have them, in the form of diamond editions, concealed up their flowing sleeves. As soon as it is light enough, two themes for prose essays, and one for a poem,\* are carried round on long poles, and are copied down by all. Then ensues a struggle as to who shall finish first, a certain proportion of marks being allowed for speed in composition; and, by degrees, all the papers are handed in, and the candidates disperse. Some few days afterwards the list is issued: and it is a joyful moment for those who find themselves in possession of the first literary degree—a degree which launches its owner fairly in a recognised career, entitles him to wear official dress with a gilt button of the lowest grade, and exempts him as a prisoner, or as a witness, from the indignity of the bamboo—at any rate, until such time as his case shall have been reported to the higher authorities, and his diploma cancelled. From this moment he is nominally an officer of the State, though doomed to remain still for some time, and possibly for ever, in the position of an unemployed and unpaid attaché. His own energy and abilities must determine the rest. He may now either obtain by purchase† or influence subordinate employment as secretary, clerk, etc., in some department of the metropolitan or provincial administration, and trust to chance to work his

\* Specimen themes are given below, in the description of the examination for the second degree.

† Not from the State, but from the mandarin, in whose office the particular patronage is vested.

way along in the world; or, he may stick closely to his books, proceed to a study of the *Five Canons*, and present himself at the great public competition for the second or master's degree, holden once in every three years at the provincial capitals of China. This is an ordeal of a much severer description than the examination for the first degree. In addition to an accurate knowledge and understanding of the *Four Books*, to considerable skill in the composition of essays and poetry, the candidate who would hope to succeed must have made a close study of the five difficult and abstruse works comprised under the above title. These *Five Canons*—'canon' in its ecclesiastical sense—may be briefly described as follows:—

I. *The Book of Changes*.—Dates from the twelfth century B.C., and contains a fanciful system of philosophy, of a Pythagorean character, deduced from the sixty-four combinations of eight original diagrams, or arrangements of a line and a divided line, thus



etc., each of which represents some power in nature, either active or passive, such as *fire, water, thunder*, etc. Confucius made an extensive study of the *Book of Changes*, without, however, successfully unravelling its mysteries; and at the present day it is more incomprehensible than ever.

II. *The Book of History*.—This is a lengthy work, in a number of detached chapters, compiled by Confucius from ancient historical remains, and dealing with the

period included between the twenty-fourth and seventh centuries before Christ.

III. *The Book of Poetry*.—A collection of popular ballads, collected and arranged by Confucius, to the number of 311. The following is a specimen verse :—

The cricket is in the hall,  
And the year is drawing to a close.  
If we do not enjoy ourselves now,  
The days and months will have fled.  
But let us not go to excess :  
Let us think of the duties of our position :  
Let us not go beyond bounds in our love of pleasure :  
The virtuous man is ever on his guard.\*

IV. *The Book of Rites*.—An ancient work, containing a multiplicity of rules for the performance of ceremonies and ‘the guidance of individual conduct,’ under a great variety of conditions.

V. *Spring and Autumn*.—This consists of the annals of the petty kingdom of Lu from B.C. 722 to 484, and was written by Confucius. It is a dry and uninteresting record, dealing chiefly with names and dates ; yet it was the work by which Confucius declared that men would know him, and Mencius considered it as important an achievement as the draining of the empire by the Great Yü, saying, “Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn*, and rebellious ministers and bad sons were struck with terror.” The title has two explanations : (1) that “its commendations are life-giving like the spring, and its censures life-withering like autumn ;

\* Legge’s translation.

(2) that to each entry in the annals was prefixed the year, month, day, and *season*—i.e., spring or autumn—in which the event recorded took place. The following is a short specimen-extract from this renowned history, which is admittedly of little value, taken apart from the famous commentary upon it by Tso, a disciple of Confucius, of whom very little is known :—

In the duke's sixteenth year, in spring, in the king's first month, on Mow-shin, the first day of the moon, there fell stones in Sung—five of them.

In the same month six fish-hawks flew backwards, past the capital of Sung.

Such are the actual text-books of a Chinese educational course, an intimate acquaintance with which is the *sine quâ non* of success. But no ambitious student limits himself to the particular ground covered by these. Besides poring over tome after tome of commentary and other exegetical aid, and comparing the conclusions of the schoolmen of the Han dynasty, with those more consistent interpretations which we owe to the genius of Chu Hsi,\* he will devour volume after volume of the ponderous histories of Ssü-ma Kuang and Ssü-ma Ch'ien, and linger over favourite poets and essay-writers, until the first streaks of morning light struggle through his bamboo blind. To poultice his weary brain, he will have a wide choice among the voluminous works of fiction, and the deservedly popular historical romances, which really form no unimportant branch of Chinese

\* The Han dynasty lasted from about B.C. 200 to A.D. 200. Chu Hsi flourished under the Sung dynasty, dying A.D. 1200.



literature, though by custom rigidly excluded from all recognition as such; and with a more or less severe training in the above curriculum, he proceeds to compete for the much envied master's degree.

The examination is held in the autumn of every third year, by an Imperial Commissioner, usually spoken of as the Grand Examiner, who is specially deputed by the Emperor for that purpose. On arrival from Peking, his residence is formally sealed up, and extraordinary precautions are taken to prevent friends of intending candidates from approaching him in an improper sense. At an early hour on the appointed day, the candidates begin to assemble, and by-and-by the great gates of the examination hall are thrown open, and heralds shriek out the names of those who are to enter. Each one answers 'Adsum' in turn as his name is called, and forthwith receives from the attendants a roll of paper marked with the number of the open cell he is to occupy in one of the long alleys into which the examination hall is divided. Other writing materials, as well as food, he carries with him in a basket, which is always carefully searched at the door. When all have found their seats, the Grand Examiner burns incense, and closes the entrance gates, through which no ingress nor egress will now be permitted on any pretence whatever, until the afternoon of the third day, when the first of three bouts or sittings is at an end. In case of death—which is by no means unusual, where a large body of human beings are cooped up day and night in a confined space—the body is always hoisted over the outer wall; and this rule

would be carried out even were it the Grand Examiner himself, whose place would then be taken by his chief Assistant-Examiner, a functionary who is also nominated by the Emperor, and accompanies the Grand Examiner from Peking. The themes are next exhibited, and copied down by the candidates. For this first bout there are three for prose essays, always taken from the *Four Books*, and one subject for a poem. All the following specimens for each bout were set at one of these triennial examinations for the master's degree, held the year before last, at a provincial capital, at which about 12,000 candidates competed for only sixty-one places. There is no limit to age, and history records one instance of the success of an old man of eighty-two. In the present case, the youngest successful competitor, who stood thirty-fourth on the list, was only nineteen; while the oldest, who came out fourteenth, was no less than fifty-three years of age.

### BOUT I.

#### *For Prose Essays :—*

- (1). Tzū Kung said : Suppose the case of a ruler conferring extensive benefits upon the people, and able to assist all.
- (2). This rule [of conferring honours on three generations of ancestors] was extended to the princes, great officers, scholars, and people.
- (3). To hold a middle course without deviation is as bad as holding to an extreme.

#### *For a Poem :—*

The azure precipice was half concealed in a mass of rolling clouds.

It may be mentioned here that an essay should consist

of about 700 to 800 characters in length, and the poem of eighty characters, both to be correctly written, and the latter in a stated metre; the paper, moreover, not to be soiled, or torn. On the afternoon of the third day, the candidates hand in their compositions, and are then released until the next morning, when they re-assemble for a second bout of three days, as before, to compose five essays on themes taken from the *Five Canons*.

## BOUT II.

*For Prose Essays :—*

- (1). Of suspended bodies none can exceed in brightness the sun and the moon.
- (2). The articles of tribute from this province, in the time of Yü (B.C. 2205), were Ch'un wood, yew trees, cedars, grindstones, whetstones, arrow-head stones, and cinnabar. Also wood of the Kwan, Lu, and Hu trees.
- (3). O my husbandmen ! the harvest is all gathered in. Let us go to the town and build our houses.
- (4). The Marquis of Ch'i, the Duke of Sung, the Marquis of Ch'in, the Marquis of Wei, and the Earl of Ch'ing had a meeting at K'ien.
- (5). In the time of the Hia dynasty the Imperial drum was placed on feet; during the Shang dynasty it was supported on pillars; and in the Chow dynasty it was suspended.

Again, on the afternoon of the third day, the results of their labours are handed in by the candidates, and the gates thrown open, to be closed as before on the following morning, for a third and last bout of three days, devoted to answering questions on miscellaneous topics, selected by the examiners from any source they may choose.

## BOUT III.

Questions on :—

- (1). The text and various readings of the *Five Canons*.
- (2). Discrepancies in the standard histories of the empire.
- (3). The merits and demerits of works on agriculture published under preceding dynasties, prefaced by the remark that The Government of a country is founded upon its agriculture, and the produce of the fields is the people's heaven.
- (4). The ancient geography of the province.
- (5). The authorship, date, and literary value of certain celebrated collections of essays.

During this severe ordeal of nine days in all, strange scenes are occasionally enacted within. Sometimes a candidate collapses from sheer exhaustion ; sometimes one is found hanging from the beam overhead, or lying in a pool of blood with his throat cut across. Only last year, the Grand Examiner appointed to Foochow conducted the proceedings with the usual decorum until the third day of the First Bout, when suddenly His Excellency's reason gave way. He tore up a number of the essays already handed in, and scattered the pieces flying all over the daïs appropriated to his use. He rushed down among the alleys of cells which the candidates were just leaving, and bit and cuffed everybody who came in his way, until finally secured by order of the Assistant-Examiner, and bound hand and foot in his chair. On one occasion, a bachelor of arts presented himself, to be examined for the higher degree, dressed in woman's clothes, with his face highly rouged and powdered, as the custom is. He was immediately

arrested by the guard, and the poor fellow was then found to be hopelessly insane. His first degree was taken from him, and he was quietly sent home to his friends. On another occasion, a candidate handed in a paper on which was nothing but a drawing of a huge turtle (forming part of a Chinese term of abuse), with the significant legend underneath—'Call me this if you catch me here again!' In a further instance, a man of some property occupied himself for the first three days in carefully drawing up his last will and testament. His mental equilibrium had been disturbed under the excitement of the moment; and when, after a few days' nursing, he regained a clearer view of human affairs, he discovered, to his infinite chagrin, that his previously earned degree of bachelor had also been taken from him. A percentage of blank papers are regularly handed in, reminding one of the blank letters and post-cards which form part of the annual statistics of the Post-master-General's return. The name of any candidate who commits this breach of regulations is at once struck off the list, and his former diploma of bachelor is taken from him.

As far as the candidates are concerned, the examination is now at an end, and accordingly they disperse to their own homes, there to await the news of failure or of success. Perhaps they resume meanwhile their usual student's life, alternating fits of sustained work with wine-parties, moonlight excursions, and the composition of Chinese *vers de société* by the ream. Groups of these students are often to be seen regaling themselves

with tea and pipes at some hill-side temple, upon the walls of which they generally leave behind Bacchanalian or amatory mementos of a jovial afternoon. They form literary clubs, and meet periodically to write essays and poems upon given themes, submitting these to the decision of a qualified arbitrator, and putting together a small pool of money to be handed by him to the winner. They write inscriptions of a Damon-and-Pythias tenor on each others' fans, and exchange presents of scrolls, traced in an ancient or fanciful style of the calligraphic art. They all smoke tobacco, and hate foreign missionaries with an undying hatred, which becomes intensified rather than mitigated by age and experience; and not one of them can be brought even to glance at propagandist publications. They regard us generally, do these *literati* of China, with an unmixed intellectual scorn, and fondly lap themselves in a stock phrase that they have nothing to learn from 'barbarians.'

But to return. The list of successful candidates is at length ready, and is posted at midnight, always with a surging and excited crowd thronging the streets and anxious to hear the result, which is immediately borne away to the residences of the fortunate ones by professional runners, who receive a considerable honorarium if the first to bring the good news.

The next thought of the newly-fledged provincial graduate is to betake himself to Peking for the examination of metropolitan graduate, holden, like the last, once in every three years, and in the spring directly ensuing. For this purpose, money has frequently to be

scraped together from all quarters. Friends subscribe and pawnbrokers loan; bills are given and articles of jewellery and vertu are pledged; and away goes the candidate full of high hope, oft-times counting chickens that are never destined to see the light. In the old days, it was a long and tiresome journey, possibly by junk or overland, from the southern provinces of China, involving great risks of robbery and even of death by the way; but now the provincial graduate makes friends with barbarian civilisation, in so far as to unroll his mat and bedding in a comfortable bunk on the lower deck of a coast steamer, performing the whole distance snugly and speedily to within eighty miles of the capital. For the rest, little remains to be said. The examination is conducted upon lines almost identical with those of the provincial competition for the preceding degree. It is similarly divided into three sittings, of three days to each, and the subjects, taken from the same sources, are necessarily of the same character. Some 8,000 to 9,000 candidates compete, and among them about 300 degrees are distributed. Further tests are subsequently applied, to determine the final order of arrangement, and the three who ultimately head the list are proud men indeed. Their names become household words for the time being in every town and hamlet over the vast area of civilised China; they are the heroes of the hour; and, in the ordinary course of events, their future fortunes are amply secured. The remaining winners of this degree are divided into three classes. Upon the first are bestowed appointments in the National

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personal

Academy of Literature; upon the second, subordinate posts in government offices at Peking; and upon the third, nominations to the ranks of 'expectant' officials, under the various provincial administrations;—and the world is all before them.

Here the system of education and of public competition comes to a natural end. The humblest individual in the empire, provided always that his record is unsoiled, may aspire to the highest offices of State; and the widespread feeling that their rulers are not mere placemen, undoubtedly goes far towards reconciling the Chinese people with a yoke of government which might otherwise be too galling to bear. Thoroughly conversant as each one of these successful graduates must be with the great principles of moral and material sway as enunciated in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, many of them go forth to rule over large masses of their countrymen, so far underpaid by the State that it is an understood thing whence and how the deficit is to be made up. The officials of China derive their salaries direct from the people. Instead of collecting the revenues of their offices, and handing over the total to the Imperial Exchequer, from which they would receive a fixed stipend in return for the services thus rendered, they pay fixed amounts to the State, filtered in every case through their immediate superiors, and keep whatever balance they can for their own private purses. This is the system which prejudiced persons persist in calling one ✓ of bribery and corruption. But bribery and corruption begin only where this system ends. As long as Chinese



magistrates collect fees and taxes at equitable rates, and administer justice with impartial hand, the system cannot be said to be at fault ; and anything beyond this is simply an abuse of power. Such abuse is unhappily not unknown, but its extent has been greatly exaggerated. An avaricious mandarin is not long tolerated. The people recognise a definite limit to the exactions of their officials, and all 'squeezes' within the boundary are cheerfully submitted to and paid. But any attempt to overstep the line leads on, at first, to individual grumbling and discontent ; finally, to rising and a popular *émeute*, which, right or wrong, inevitably costs the mandarin his appointment, if not his head.

In conclusion, success at these public examinations is considered by the Chinese to result from one or other, or from the aggregate of five special causes, enumerated in the following order of importance :—

- (1). Luck.
- (2). Predestination.
- (3). Influence exerted by propitious site of family graves.
- (4). Good deeds done in secret.
- (5). Study.

This, however, is more a popular than a faithful statement of the case. Any one whose life has been mixed up with the *literati* of China must know well that, as a rule, the successful candidates at these great competitions are more proficient in what knowledge and literary skill may be required of them than those who fail. Among the latter there are, doubtless, often to be found men

of more real literary capacity, as witness the famous author of the *Liao-Chai*, whose untoward fate the Chinese are never tired of quoting in proof, if any were wanted, that genius does not always push its way to the front in a competition of the kind. And doubtless, too, men of much administrative and other ability are frequently doomed in a similar way to the disappointments of a private life; but, on the whole, the broad results of competitive examinations are to the public advantage, and they have stood China in good stead for many centuries past. In what may be termed the mechanical part of the system, there is nothing whatever to be changed; only in the scope of subjects is a marked enlargement made necessary by the altered conditions of the age. Like most Chinese institutions, this one is excellently contrived; and like many others in other parts of the world, it would work to perfection in the hands of conscientious and immaculate officials.

## THE BOOK LANGUAGE OF CHINA.\*

FOR any one to state vaguely that he means to 'learn Chinese' is almost as indefinite as to announce an intention of entering upon a course of 'science.' In the first place, 'Chinese' is often used collectively of the written and spoken languages of China, as if there existed between these two distinct branches of study the same relation that we know to exist between written and spoken French. But the language of Chinese speech is never written down *totidem verbis*.† The result of such a process would in Chinese eyes be simply ludicrous; not to mention that for much of the *patois* of China there are no corresponding characters, in which case it would of course be impossible. When a Chinaman sits down to write, say the evidence of a witness in a court of justice, he does not put on paper what the man actually says, but translates as he goes along the colloquial into the book language. A foreigner may learn either or both. Stanislas Julien, who never

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† Except in the case of farces, songs, parts of low-class novels, etc., in which a very near approach is made to the colloquial. The missionaries, too, issue religious tracts in this form; and the Bible itself has been published in the vulgar tongue of more than one province, thus becoming a literary absurdity in the eyes of all educated Chinese,

went to China, was an accomplished scholar of the written language, though ignorant of the colloquial; and many residents at the various treaty ports are able to converse fluently in the local dialects while totally unable to read a single character. But before proceeding any further with the main object of this investigation it may be desirable to insert just a few remarks on the spoken language of China. To begin with, there are at least five strongly marked dialects, differing so widely one from another as to make them practically, though not really, five separate languages. Natives who speak only their own dialect are as unintelligible to their fellow-countrymen who do not know that dialect as an Englishman and a Russian are mutually unintelligible if neither happens to be acquainted with the language of the other.\* It is true that from time immemorial the dialect spoken at court has been recognised as the medium of intercommunication all over the empire; but it is also true that only those who live within the radius where that form of speech prevails will learn it as their mother-tongue. Pekingese is now regarded as the best 'Mandarin';† whereas in former days, when Nanking was the capital, the dialect spoken in and around that

\* Hence, the not uncommon phenomenon of an Englishman acting as interpreter between two Chinamen. Sometimes the latter are both able to speak English; and we were informed only the other day that Chinese educated in Hongkong, for instance, frequently *write* to each other in English, in preference to their own language.

† All officials speak the so-called Mandarin dialect, as also do many of the better class of tradesmen, whose business often calls them to a distance from home.

city was taken as the official model. Both would be unknown to an inhabitant of Canton.

I must now further warn my readers that although it is not unusual to speak generally of the book language of China, that too is subdivided into several classes, for each of which a certain amount of special training is required. For the present purpose it will be sufficient to keep in view two principal divisions—namely, the official and business languages on the one hand, and the ornate style of poets, essayists, etc., on the other. From the first of these all flowery or fine writing is rigorously excluded: the lucid expression of the writer's meaning is the sole object of a Chinese despatch, save always in those instances where it may be desired rather to conceal than to make plain. Even then this may be accomplished only by the aid of a grammatical confusion, and not by the introduction of abstruse or uncommon terms. In fact, the tacitly acknowledged rules of Chinese despatch-writing accord very much with those once circulated by Lord Palmerston, calling upon all members of the diplomatic and consular services to forward their communications written in a plain round hand; to avoid treating of two subjects in a single despatch; to aim at perspicuity above all things; and never to make use of a foreign phrase when an English one would answer as well. But it is the latter and more interesting division that I now propose to examine—the last refuge of that old Chinese pride and faith in themselves, as opposed to the outer barbarian, which received a mortal wound at the capture of Peking.\*

\* By the allied British and French forces in 1860.

The once prevalent belief in the great difficulty of acquiring a colloquial knowledge even of a single Chinese dialect has long since taken its place among other historical fictions;\* but it is still admitted on all sides that the written language of China requires nothing short of the devoted energies of a lifetime. Few, however, of those to whom this saying is proverbially familiar, would care to be called upon at a moment's notice to justify the remark. For we see from day to day the ordinary Chinese literate, of say twenty-five years of age, reading with apparent ease any work that chance may throw into his hands; and we know that up to the age of seven or eight† he was playing about in the streets without educational restraint of any kind. We also know that the habits of idleness contracted thus early in the life of a Chinese schoolboy make him a very difficult subject to manage when confined in a close room to pore over and commit to memory a number of characters, the meaning of which he is not taught until several years afterwards, and surrounded as he is by a roomful of companions each shrieking out his own lesson almost at the very top of his voice. Add to this the fact that the first thing these boys do on leaving school is to get married, and that their subsequent studies are not carried on in anything like the systematic manner which insures success to candidates for

\* Exclusive of those who make a study of Chinese, there are now to be found among foreign residents in China many who have picked up by ear the dialect of their own locality.

† Until he reaches this age, the Chinese child learns absolutely nothing.

literary distinctions among ourselves ; and we shall begin to wonder indeed how it is that fifteen or sixteen years of persevering effort do not yield the same result to a European of average ability, whose advantages of previous training more than outweigh the one disadvantage of beginning later in life.\* And that my readers may be enabled to form their own conclusion, possibly a new one, as to the real difficulties of the book language of China, I have arranged them under the four following headings :—

I. *Characters*.—The first obstacle encountered by students of Chinese is the multiform nature of the written symbols. To a beginner who learns his twenty-five characters a day for a fortnight or so, and then finds himself obliged to diminish that number, some part of his time being necessarily devoted to going over the old ground,† it seems almost hopeless that he will ever acquire a mastery over some 6,000 or 7,000 of these slippery puzzles.‡ The more so as in nine cases out of ten the student makes a false start, learning each character by its general form, without relation to any other character, and without analyzing the construction of its component parts. By degrees, when much valuable time has been already wasted, it occurs to the more attentive that these apparently fortuitous combinations

\* Few foreigners begin to learn Chinese before the age of one- or two-and-twenty ; many much later.

† 'For only by varied iteration can alien conceptions be forced upon reluctant minds.'—HERBERT SPENCER'S *Data of Ethics*.

‡ This is about the number required by the student who wishes to be able to read any ordinary Chinese book or document.

of strokes fall naturally into certain groups with common elements to each. Later on, it is perceived that each character is divisible into two parts, from one of which the *sound* may usually be predicted even though the character in question has never been met before, and from the other of which may be gained a tolerably accurate clue to the *meaning*.\* The difficulty of the problem is thus very much modified: it becomes no longer a question of committing to memory an immense number of separate pictures, but rather of classifying new acquisitions under old phonetic groups in which the radicals play the part of differentiators as regards the sense. It is impossible to give an accurate illustration of this in English: the following examples are the nearest we can get. A schoolboy meeting the word *Pliocene* for the first time would learn by two efforts of memory that it was derived from two Greek words meaning 'more' and 'new'; but when subsequently he sees *Eocene*, *Miocene*, and *Pleistocene*, he has only one new word to remember in each case instead of two, the latter half *cene* being common to all. In Chinese, however, the only function of the *cene* half, which we will regard as corresponding with the phonetic of a character, is to determine the sound, not of that half alone but of the whole character. The *eo*, *mi*, etc., are the radicals or differentiators, which give the reader a clue to the sense. Again, in Chinese every tree, plant, shrub, etc., is written with either one of the two radicals *wood* or *grass*, the

\* The former of these is generally called the *phonetic*, the latter the *radical*, of a character.



phonetics differing in each instance according to the sound of the character. So in English we have *school-room*, *school-boy*, *school-master*, etc., answering somewhat to a group of Chinese characters in which the radical is a constant quantity.

I have no wish to pretend that the acquisition of a large number of Chinese characters is otherwise than a sufficiently difficult task ; still, a student gifted with an average memory should be able in five years' study to store up enough to carry him through any ordinary business or official documents, light novels, etc. ; and were these characters the sole hindrance in his way, I should be at a loss to understand how it is that the written language of China has so long been regarded as something beyond the powers of an ordinary Englishman.\*

II. *Grammar*.—I will take it for granted that my readers know Chinese to be a non-flexional language in the fullest sense of the term. There are no declensions either of substantives, adjectives, or pronouns, and no moods, conjugations, or tenses of verbs, each word being complete in itself and incapable of any modification of form whatever. The syntax of a sentence is, therefore, the only clue to determining the relative

\* In my opinion, Professor Stokes' system of aids to the memory could never be utilised by the student of Chinese. I venture to say this, not wishing in any way to depreciate an otherwise valuable help, with the merits of which I myself am personally acquainted ; but from a desire that no intending learner should quit the main road in search of a short cut, the very existence of which to me seems exceedingly doubtful.

value of its units ; or, as it has been well put, 'the whole of Chinese grammar depends upon position.' This is the key by which, with proper attention to certain laws, the seemingly tangled skein of written Chinese may be accurately unravelled, and made to yield up a meaning, and *one meaning only*. It is not true that half-a-dozen different constructions may be placed upon one and the same sentence according to mere fancy ; the rules of Chinese composition are, if anything, more stringently adhered to than our own, though, of course, equivoques and ambiguities of speech are not altogether unknown. The responses of the oracle at Delphi have their counterparts in all languages ; but it is quite inaccurate to represent that these occur more frequently or are more easily produced in Chinese than in any other language. Where, as occasionally in the archaic style, transposition of words is carried to an extreme limit, it is often very difficult to determine the exact function of each particular word ; such transpositions, however, are comparatively rare, and are always based upon some precedent in the classics with which the reader is naturally supposed to be familiar. Thus we have in Mencius a sentence of four characters arranged as follows :—'To-distribute men according-to riches.' This means 'to distribute riches according to the men,' and upon such a precedent a modern writer would not hesitate to build a similar phrase, which he would expect all educated readers to identify at once. Here the foreign student is again at a disadvantage, for he has never, like his Chinese rival, learned the works of Mencius by heart. The most

curious specimen of such transposition ever noticed by myself is the following : \*—‘ Mother served sister-in-law,’ as applied to a very virtuous young lady, who, to give the real meaning of the sentence, ‘served her sister-in-law as if that sister-in-law had been her mother.’ Yet, strange though it may seem, there is no particular difficulty in this sentence taken where it stands: there is absolutely nothing else which it could mean. However, as we saw just now in the case of characters, so with regard to grammar; its difficulties melt away before a course of systematic study; and thus far in our analysis we are unable to say that there is anything very impracticable in the book language of China, But now, granting that the student has stored up in his memory a considerable number of characters, and is tolerably familiar with the laws of Chinese syntax, it by no means follows that he can understand an essay, a stanza of poetry, or even an ordinary letter. For behind these simpler elements stands a grim spectre, overshadowing the language with its dark, impenetrable wing, the pride and delight of the Chinese pundit, but the source of much despair and hope long deferred to the European learner who would wander at his own sweet will through the grotesquely-arranged garden of Chinese literature.

III. *Ornamentation*.—Chinese prose and poetry alike, to be of any literary value whatever, must bristle from beginning to end with allusions to the events and personages of their own almost immeasurable past. More

\* See the *Liao Chai*, Vol. VII., p. 57, of the usual sixteen-volume edition.

than this, it is barely allowable to call anything by its right name; some figure of speech or half-expressed quotation—and the more obscure the better—must be called in to do duty in place of the universally tabooed spade. Hence, in the elucidation of a passage written in this peculiar style, the Chinese student of his native tongue has an immense advantage over the European student of Chinese. Given an unfamiliar metaphor, the former is able in a great majority of cases either to guess its meaning, or, at any rate, obtain a clue thereto. His mind has been schooled since childhood into a particular attitude, which strikes us only as being awry. Manners, customs, and folk-lore, which we have to learn, are to him every-day topics of conversation. His familiarity with the great store-houses of allusion, the Chinese classics, committed to memory in early life, is such that a well-chosen word or two will always call to mind any passage required for use. Upon these last the poets and essayists of China have ever largely drawn for the means of saying simple things in obscure language; and the greatest of them have, by a power of combining the old in a fresh and original manner, raised their own works to the standard of those from which such quotations may be made, and have thus very much enlarged the field of operations for all those who come after. I shall perhaps give a better idea of this, the marked peculiarity of all Chinese works written with any pretensions to scholarship, by translating a piece of simple English into the form it would assume under the hands of a Chinese artist.

Let us take, for example, the following :—

The *divinity* (1) he sits on his *fierce-light* (2) that *glisters* (3),  
 Fenced in by *whatever-is* (4) *the-hand-that-made-us* (5);  
 The *king-maker* (6) he sits in his *Englishman's-house* (7) old,  
*Eyeing* (8) his *first-falling* (9) *herring-coloured* (10) *devil* (11).

Which stood originally in the columns of *Punch* :—

The king he sits on his throne of gold,  
 Fenced in by his right divine;  
 The baron he sits in his castle old,  
 Drinking his ripe red wine.

The italicised words refer, of course, as follows :—

- (1). There's a divinity doth hedge a *king*.
- (2). The fierce light that beats upon a *throne*.
- (3). All that glisters is not *gold*.
- (4). Whatever is, is *right*.
- (5). The hand that made us is *divine*.
- (6). Earl Warwick, the last of the *barons*.
- (7). An Englishman's house is his *castle*.
- (8). *Drink* to me only with thine eyes.
- (9). The *ripest* fruit first falls.
- (10). Is neither fish, nor flesh, nor good *red* herring.
- (11). O thou invisible spirit of *wine*, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil !

Ridiculous and exaggerated as the above may seem, I can assure my readers that, quantitatively speaking, the picture is by no means overdrawn. In some of the more laboured Chinese essays almost every word is made to play more or less a figurative part; and many of their most valued works cannot be read, even by scholars, without the commentary by the side. But we will now proceed to examine more closely these difficulties, which I have divided for convenience sake under two sub-heads.

A. *Allusions*.—First of all there is the mythological or historical allusion in its direct form, when the name of the god or hero is actually quoted; in its indirect form, when merely a hint is given as to the identity in question. Of the former, I need only say that to understand each such allusion in its fullest sense implies a knowledge of the history or mythology of China such as few native scholars possess; of the latter, that our own literature presents numerous examples analogous in every respect. For instance, when Milton says—

Or call up him that left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold,

he has said enough for the man of literary cultivation.\* So, too, everybody who has read Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women* knows who is meant by 'the morning star of song.'† In fact, I am acquainted with nothing in the British language which could be taken as a better specimen of the highest flights of Chinese inspiration than the last-named beautiful poem.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head,‡ or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,§  
Sweet as new buds in spring.

\* See *Il Penseroso*. The allusion is to an unfinished poem by Chaucer, subsequently completed by Spenser. See *The Faerie Queene*, Book IV., canto ii., stanza 32. † Chaucer.

‡ Margaret Roper, the devoted daughter of Sir Thomas More.

§ Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward the First.

Similarly, all readers of Gray know well enough who is meant by 'Nature's darling.' But we must pass on to the second form of allusion, which is really nothing more or less than quotation, though not quotation in the ordinary sense of the term. It has been fully exemplified in the verse which we just now clothed in a Chinese dress, and consists in borrowing one or more words from some passage in the classics or other standard work to represent perhaps the whole idea contained in that passage. We may compare this with our own use of such phrases as 'utile dulci,' which recently appeared underneath a picture in *Punch*. To talk about the 'utile dulci' as we do in common parlance is, of course nonsense, taken by itself and without the mental reservation of—

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit [utile dulci].

Two specimens from the Chinese will probably suffice. Let us begin with the every-day book phrase, 'He was no doubts old'—meaningless of course to the European reader, but simple enough to any one who recollects that in the *Lun Yü* or *Discourses*, Confucius says :—

At fifteen, I was bent on learning.

At thirty, I was fixed [in that determination].

At forty, I had no doubts, etc.

And thus 'no doubts' has come to be elegantly substituted for the coarser expression 'forty years.'

The next example is more recondite, and would be a fair puzzle to any native scholar :—'They began to *moon*

*first* every one they met.' Now the Chinese is a lunar year of twelve months, with an intercalary month in every third year, and there is but one term in the language for both. Thus 'moon first' means first of the moon or month. So much for the mere words, which would avail us little did we not know that in the biography of a certain well-known scholar it is related how he and his brother, also a man of high literary repute, were in the habit of going out on the first day of each month and *quizzing* the people they saw passing and repassing on their way to and from the temples. Hence 'to moon first' has come to be regarded as a synonym of 'to quiz.'

B. *Figures of Speech*.—Metaphor, metonymy, catachresis, irony, and all kinds of tropes are extensively used in every branch of Chinese literature, always excepting the business and official styles, in which, however, such metaphors as may have become part of the colloquial language do occasionally appear. As I have already observed, the test of a well-written despatch is the ready comprehension of it by the person to whom it is addressed; whereas an elegant obscurity, arising from an extended use of allusions and figures of speech, is the sole end and aim of the Chinese poet or prose writer. Take, for instance, the word *pai*, 'white.' A 'white business' signifies a death or funeral, that being the colour of Chinese mourning garments, just as a 'red business' stands for a wedding, red being the emblem of joy, the colour of the bride's dress, her bridal palanquin, etc. Again, a 'white man' or a 'white-clothes man' is a



person who has no official status—one of the people, in fact—and who has therefore no right to wear the button and splendid robes of a mandarin. Similarly, a private family is often spoken of as a 'white house.' 'White characters' are Chinese symbols wrongly written for others of precisely the same sound but of a different meaning; just as if a bad speller of English were to put 'the air of all the ages' or 'the misletoe bow.' 'White language' is a term applied to the local dialects of China, a great portion of each existing only in a colloquial form and having no corresponding characters. To look at a person with 'white eyes' is to slight or disregard him; in other words, it is to look at him with the whites and not with the pupils. In the *Life of Yüan Chi* we read that on the occasion of his mother's death two brothers, acquaintances of his, came to condole with him. The first arrived empty-handed, and was coldly received with the 'whites;' while his younger brother, who had brought with him the usual present, was gratified by a sight of Yüan Chi's 'pupils.' To continue, 'to fly white' is to skip a page in reading; 'to eat white' is to batten at somebody else's expense; and 'to take trouble whitely' is equivalent to labouring in vain. 'White sun' and 'white heaven' signify in broad daylight; 'the great white' is Venus; and white preceded by a number generally stands for so many years; e.g., 'five whites' = five years, from the annual occurrence of snow. I have said *generally*, having once met the phrase 'three whites' used for three bumpers of wine, though without any accompanying explanation. And

so I might go on giving many other instances of the figurative usage of the single word 'white;' but I shall probably have done enough if I add it frequently appears used as a verb, meaning 'to state,' 'to speak,' the idea involved being the same as that in our own phrase 'to make clear.'

I will now place before my readers an imaginary Chinese letter of the complimentary order, upon the mere substance of which it will not be necessary to dwell, my sole object being that of introducing a few common figures of speech, such as might be met with in any composition of the kind.

#### FROM A FRIEND TO A FRIEND.

Throughout our long separation, anxiety for your welfare has never ceased to hang around your servant's heart. He thirsts very much to see you again; and now, learning from your jewelled tablet that your chariot has returned to its palatial mansion, he would implore you ten thousand not to be sparing of your jade, but to let your brightness descend upon his rush hut, that you and he may once more talk with fingers beneath the Silver River. Alas! your unworthy menial is drawing near the wood. His hand-the-clothes and his little dog have already prepared for him the planks and robes of old age, and he will shortly be wandering upon the Terrace of Night. He therefore prays you to speedily illuminate his humble abode, and remove the reproach of the autumn fan.

The 'jewelled tablet' is of course the letter previously received by the writer from his friend, and is only one among a host of similar metaphors applied in the same sense. The 'chariot' is the friend himself, and his 'palatial mansion' might very possibly be nothing more than a 'two-pair back,' or rather the equivalent of some

such humble lodging, as Chinese houses rarely rise more than one storey above the ground.\* 'Ten thousand' is merely an intensive, answering to 'on no account;' but 'to spare jade' is an ellipsis for 'to spare one's jade footsteps,' the complimentary word 'jade,' or a similar term, being invariably inserted when writing or speaking of anybody else's belongings. Thus, a person's wife is 'the precious lady,' his father 'the honoured venerable,' his son 'the honoured gentleman,' his daughter 'the honoured loved one,' often 'the honoured ten thousand [ounces of] gold,' as indicative of her great value; and even if a man has the stomach-ache, it is absolutely necessary to speak of it to him as his 'worshipful complaint.' I may here mention, *en passant*, that a common nickname for one's own daughter, or girls in general, is 'lose-money goods,' from the fact that a daughter always carries money in the shape of a dowry from her own to a stranger's family; this process being of course reversed in the case of sons. But to proceed. It is impossible, according to all laws of epistolary and conversational etiquette in China, to address any one but an inferior in the second person. I have put 'your brightness' for the sake of making it clear to the reader that the meaning is 'you;' the original would contain but the single word 'brightness.' The 'rush hut' is of course antithetical to the 'palatial mansion;' to 'talk

\* In Peking, care is taken that no one builds his house higher than his neighbour's, lest he should be spying into the adjoining courtyards or small gardens in which the ladies of each family are wont to sit on summer afternoons, sometimes very lightly clad.

with fingers' is an elegant expression for 'playing at chess;' and the 'Silver River' is better known to Europeans as the 'Milky Way.' 'Unworthy menial' stands for the pronoun 'I'; and to 'draw near the wood' is but another form of our own 'one foot in the grave,' the term 'wood' being used by metonymy for the coffin. This last exquisite figure originated with the philosopher Tso, who wrote the celebrated commentary (*Tso Chuan*) on Confucius' great work, *Spring and Autumn*.—'She is twenty-three and I am twenty-five; and marrying thus, we shall draw near the wood together.' A 'hand-the-clothes,' sometimes a 'hand-the-towel-and-comb,' is a common book term for a wife, from her supposed duties as *femme de chambre* to her husband; its use, however, is illustrative rather of a theory than of any system actually in practice among the Chinese. So 'little dog' is said depreciatingly of one's own son; and 'the planks and robes of old age' are the boards\* and grave-clothes that will moulder with the body to dust in its last resting-place, 'the Terrace of an eternal Night.' Death has comparatively few terrors for the peaceable, law-abiding Chinaman who is conscious of no neglect of his country's gods; but it is none the less a hateful contingency, in that he is thereby deprived of the light of day, the oft-

\* The Chinese make beautiful coffins; and as the dead body is kept in the house for many days after death, until an auspicious hour for interment has arrived, it is necessary above all things that the coffin should be air-tight. This is tested by occasionally passing round a lighted candle, close to the seams.

recurring pleasures of the rice-bowl, and the sound of his children's voices. Therefore he veils every allusion to the inevitable hour with some graceful metaphor, investing the circumstances of dissolution with a desirableness not their own. Everything connected with the grave is spoken of as part of an imaginary 'old age,' which two words may be seen conspicuous in the shop-sign of every Chinese undertaker. But though an elderly gentleman views with satisfaction the present of a nice comfortable coffin for himself, or cheerfully accompanies a dutiful son to look at the spot where his own bones will some day repose, yet in conversation he refrains as much as possible from any direct or indirect mention of the great catastrophe.

There remains only the 'autumn fan,' which here stands for any apparent neglect of the writer by his friend, but is a figure of speech usually applied to a deserted wife, who is cast aside, like the fan, when her summer of life is over.\* *A propos* of which I venture to add the nobler Chinese saying that 'the bran wife should not go down from the hall'—*i.e.*, the wife who has shared the poverty-stricken days of bran food should not be discarded in the hour of prosperity and wealth. And so I might go on with almost endless instances of quaint metaphors and grotesque images, such as occur at every step in the book language of China. I will conclude, however, with two curious figures, the latter of which has been, and still remains, an example of

\* For fuller details see p. 313.

how readily mistakes may be made in the interpretation of Chinese, while the first one is cited in illustration of the advantage at which the native stands as compared with the most painstaking European student.

(1). 'He was absent about *half a blow*' is a very common book phrase, but not, as a rule, comprehensible at first sight to the foreigner, albeit he sees from the character employed that *blow* is the blowing of the wind. There is an even commoner expression, namely, 'half a meal-time,' which of course needs no explanation; and the two are nearly synonymous. 'Half a blow' means half the time it takes to blow the fire while cooking a meal, one of the functions of the Chinese cook or his mate being to fan the glowing charcoal over which the pot or frying-pan is placed.

(2). The second phrase is 'to swallow gold,' which has for many years been accepted without cavil in its literal sense even by such otherwise accurate writers as Williams and Doolittle, and is still generally regarded as a peculiarly Chinese method of committing suicide. To such an extent does this belief prevail, that a medical man now practising in China has recently put forth a grave dissertation on the consequences of swallowing this metal, which he thinks must be taken in the form of gold leaf; and he has gone so far as to offer his opinion as to the best remedy to be adopted, the same being 'the continuous exhibition of alkalies with demulcent drinks and emetics.' Now, 'to swallow gold' is simply a metaphorical expression for *taking poison*,

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especially of any such act performed by a mandarin under Imperial orders as punishment for unsuccessful military service or some failure of the kind. The revolting necessity was accordingly thus veiled; and so skilfully, that not only Europeans, for whom there is every excuse, but many well-educated Chinese, have come to believe that the phrase is actually based on the positive possibility of poisoning oneself with gold.

## A CREMATION IN CHINA.\*

IN the great city of Canton are many and extensive places of worship dedicated to the religion of Buddha, the world-honoured one; but none more worthy a visit than the 'Ocean Banner' monastery, which stands hard by on the little island of Honam, its portals laved by the muddy waters of the Pearl river. At no great distance, on the opposite bank, once stood the celebrated foreign 'factories,'\* where the pioneers of European commerce dragged out so many weary hours of *ennui* and danger, to be rewarded in most cases with those ample fortunes which are even now inseparably connected with the name of a China merchant. All this has of late years undergone a change. On the Canton side of the river, in close communication with the teeming suburbs of the city itself, has been formed, upon what was not long ago only a mud-bank, a beautiful park-like settlement, with handsome European houses scattered here and there among the trees, a public garden, a church, a club, a theatre, a racquet-court, a lawn-tennis and croquet-ground, and other striking proofs of an advanced

\* Reprinted from the *Cornhill*, by permission of the Editor.

† So called from their being the residence of *factors*, or agents of the East India Company.



civilisation. Residents who tire of the endless monotony of each other's faces, stroll away unmolested into the crush and bustle of the native town, where a new phase of humanity presents itself at every turn to the eye of the observing student. If they only conduct themselves there with becoming propriety, resisting impulses to kick each 'dirty coolie' out of their path, and attempting to fall in with rather than ignore the exigencies of Chinese street etiquette, they may wander from morn to dewy eve far into the labyrinth of lanes of which this city is composed, without the risk of even a bad word being hurled at their unoffending heads.

We landed, on the afternoon of the 27th January last, at the jetty of the Ocean Banner monastery; and, passing through the entrance gate, proceeded up a broad granite pathway, shaded on both sides with trees. Vice-Admiral Hillyar, C.B., and several of his staff were availing themselves of the opportunity of visiting this temple; in consequence of which we were soon surrounded by an unusually large crowd of excited children, all anxious to have a good stare at the red-haired barbarian. The promise of a cumshaw\* readily enlisted two of the most turbulent youngsters into our own service, and by their aid we were enabled to advance with more rapidity than we could otherwise have done. In a few moments we had reached a kind of open gateway or porch, within which were two enormous figures, one on each side, the door-keepers of the place. The figure on the right wore a

\* The Anglo-Chinese equivalent of 'baksheesh,' being a corruption of two Chinese words meaning 'grateful thanks.'

benignant smile of welcome, while his colleague opposite looked scowlingly down on us, as if to warn us against misbehaviour of any kind within the sacred precincts. "No smoking" was placarded close by in large characters; also a prohibition against eating ground-nuts, but neither seemed to be heeded by the people, nay, several of the priests themselves were very willing to accept a proffered cigar. A little farther on was another and a larger gateway, containing images of the four heavenly kings,\* whose duty it is to guard the world from the attacks of Titanic demons known as Asuras. Their faces are coloured green, red, white, and black respectively; and over their huge legs and bodies are pasted little strips of red paper, recording the names of little children confided by their anxious mothers to the protection of these deities. Beyond this gateway stands the first great *sanctum*, containing colossal images of the so-called past, present, and future Buddhas†—the Buddhist Trinity. A priest, dressed in a light drab robe folded across his breast in the form of a cross, dirty and degraded-looking as usual, half-opened one of the side doors, and in we pressed as hurriedly as we could, the priest slamming the door in the face of the crowd outside, minus the few more nimble than the rest who had managed to squeeze in with us. On each side of the Three Precious Ones were ranged smaller images of the eighteen Lo-han,‡ or chosen disciples of Shâkyamuni

\* The Tchaturmahârâdjas.

† Shâkyamuni, Avalôkitês'vara (or Kwan-yin), and Mâitrêya.

‡ Same as *Arhân*

Buddha; long scrolls of ornamental design, inscribed with the formula *Namah Amitâbha*,\* hung from the roof in all directions, the gifts of wealthy suppliants whose prayers had been heard; and in one corner was a magnificent bell, some two hundred years old, which is struck morning and evening one hundred and eight times with a kind of battering-ram suspended at its side. A ten-cent piece amply satisfied the priests in charge of this hall, and we passed on without delay to the second, in which stood a splendid marble dagoba, said to have been hewn from a single block, and covering as usual some precious relic of Buddha. At each of the four sides stands a wooden table covered with flowers, candles, incense, etc., the instrumental parts of the Buddhist as well as of the Roman Catholic religion. On one ledge of the dagoba itself was placed a bowl of water, the emblem of purity as set forth in the life and teachings of Buddha, but in no way corresponding, as has sometimes been stated, to the *eau bénite* of the Romish Church. Behind this, again, is the hall of Kuan-yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, and the Avalôkitêśvara of Indian Buddhism. We take a hasty glance at the 'sacred' pigs and cocks which are kept in the monastery in illustration of the great Buddhist commandment, 'Thou shalt not take life,' and prepare to examine into the more interesting details of the Buddhist cloister, inserting by way of preface a few desultory remarks on the social status of the monks themselves.

The ranks of the Buddhist priesthood in China are

\* 'Our humble trust is in Amida Buddha.'

generally recruited by children, purchased either from their parents or from kidnappers. It is only in times of great distress that the poorer Chinese will sell even their daughters, still less the valued son on whom may possibly devolve the paramount duty of conducting the ancestral worship; kidnapping, however, is by no means an uncommon crime, albeit the punishment on detection is a speedy and ignominious death. Occasionally, parents dedicate a child to Buddha, perhaps in fulfilment of a vow; and the victim is there and then formally made over to the Church, by deeds signed, sealed, and delivered. From this step there is no withdrawal. The child's head is completely shaved; he is made to live on a vegetable diet and forego the use of wine. He is taught to chant the Buddhist liturgies, without understanding a word of them; and after a required novitiate, proves his constancy to the faith by standing unmoved while several pastilles burn down into his scalp, leaving the ineradicable scars which testify to the fact that he has put away for ever the things of this world and has been regularly ordained as a priest. He has now 'left his home'\* in good earnest, and all that remains to him in this world is a life of celibacy and dull routine. To resume: criminals fleeing from justice not unfrequently seek refuge in a religious life, submitting to the branding of their heads and the subsequent discomforts of cloister existence rather than fall into the merciless meshes of Chinese law.† Sometimes, too, unsuccessful mandarins

\* The Chinese equivalent of our 'gone into the Church.'

† A very amusing story of this kind is told in one of the early

throw themselves into a monastery and take the vows, driven to such a step by dread of the Imperial frown. It is said that the foolish official who during the war of 1841-42, laid at the foot of the Throne his discovery of the secret of foreign steamers, and forthwith produced a vessel with two huge paddle-wheels to be turned by coolies inside, is even now languishing in one of the numerous monasteries on the celebrated Lo-fou hill in the province of Kuang-tung, whither he retired after the failure of his scheme, covered with ignominy and shame.\* From such sources as these come the priests of Buddhism in China, renouncing all ties of home and kindred for a life of celibacy, fasting, and prayer, its monotony occasionally broken by some violent act of self-sacrifice with a view to obtaining alms, such as sitting in a box studded on the inside with nails and only pulling one out each time a charitable passer-by sees fit to shorten the penance by handing in a contribution to the funds of the house. Besides the regular masses in their own temple, the priests attend at people's houses to read a service over the dead. Taoism divides with Buddhism the patronage of the illiterate: some send for Taoist

chapters of the well-known *Shui-hu*. The criminal in question gets horribly drunk and beats his brother priests right and left, etc., etc.

\* It may be interesting to some of our readers to learn that at this very moment there is a line of passenger-boats running between Canton and a town some ten or fifteen miles off, which are propelled by side-wheels turned by about twenty coolies, who work exactly as if they were on the treadmill. These boats may frequently be seen passing up and down the river, and make very good way even against the tide.

priests, some for Buddhist ; many make doubly sure by calling in the aid of both. In every monastery there are several who smoke opium ; a few are sincere ; all are dirty and brutish-looking to the last degree. The people tell sad stories of their oft-broken vows and generally irreligious demeanour—a portion of which must be set down to the scandal that usually gathers round a class professing to be better than the world in general, but much of which has indubitably a foundation of truth. In any case the reputation of the Buddhist priest is a by-word among the Chinese, whose superstitious nature forbids them at the same time to dispense altogether with the services of these despised creatures, who are not classified as ordinary men. They have no home, no country, no ancestors, no posterity. They have not even a name ; only a monastic appellation, by which they are distinguished one from another.

We had now arrived at the refectory, where the priests take their daily meals of vegetables and rice, lenten fare being their only portion from one year's end to another. 'No wine or meat may enter here,' says a placard at the gate of the temple ; and whatever may be the forbidden dainties in which the brothers indulge beyond the limits of the cloister or in their own private apartments, it is quite certain that here before the eyes of the public the commandments of Buddha are in no way infringed. The refectory is a large airy room open at one end, with a railing across to keep out strangers. At the opposite end is a small table for the abbot, so to speak, raised on a daïs about a foot high, from which

position he can see the faces of all the priests as they sit on one side only of the long narrow tables ranged on the right and left of the hall. The latter are not supposed to talk during meals;\* they are expected to act in accordance with a couplet, one among several which we copied down from the pillars on which they hung:—

Reverence the statutes of purification (by fasting):  
Pay strict attention to the rules of decorum.

In unoccupied moments they should meditate upon some passage from the *sūtras*, such as may be seen in large characters hanging from every wall. In one corner there is a table laid for mendicant or travelling priests, any of whom are entitled to three days' entertainment, provided they can show their diploma of ordination, sealed by the proper authorities. Just outside the refectory railings is a peg in the wall, and over it the inscription 'Lost Property.' On this each member of the fraternity is supposed to hang anything he may find lying about, part of a priest's dress, or any of the various implements used in their religious ceremonies. We now inspected the abbot's quarters and the loathsome dens which serve as sleeping apartments for the monks; and we were then shown into a section of the monastery connected more closely with the subject of the present

\* 'When they enter the refectory their demeanour is grave and orderly: they sit down in regular order; they all keep silence; they make no noise with their bowls, etc.; and when the attendants serve more food they do not call out to each other, but make signs with their hands.'—*Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, ch. iii. [By the present writer.]

paper. It is known as the 'Abode of a Long Old Age,' and consists of a suite of rooms specially set apart for aged or infirm priests, or such as are stricken with any mortal disease. We entered in by the 'front' gate, or Gate of Life, as opposed to the 'back' gate, or Gate of Death, which last is opened only on the occasion of a priest's demise, for this exit of his dead body. In the middle of the building is a small chapel, dedicated to the God of Medicine, and from a scroll overhead we learnt that this was the 'Hall of the Centenarian's Repose.' Around were the usual narrow bedchambers of the priests, and at one side was a small cooking-range for the preparation of their food. Three old brothers were living in this dismal place, quietly awaiting the hour of translation to a higher state. They detest, naturally enough, an enforced residence in this 'Abode of a Long Old Age;' when once the abbot's fiat has been pronounced, however, there is nothing left for them but to obey. We now passed across to a room situated opposite to the gates of life and death, where we were to view the large wooden boxes containing wooden chairs in which dead priests are placed on the day of their death, previous to the final act of cremation; and we were just about to raise the vertical slide of one of these, when the conducting priest seized us by the sleeve and whispered hurriedly, "St ! St ! there's one inside !" And immediately we saw, what we might have noticed before, that a narrow strip of yellow paper, bearing certain characters upon its face, was pasted on the slide of the box, and that a table was arranged in front with several plates of food, etc., and a taper burning



at the side. On asking particulars from our friendly guide, we learnt that the dead man had passed away in the night, and that he was to be cremated at eight o'clock on the following morning. An offer of *two* ten-cent pieces induced our informant to raise the vertical slide; and on looking in, we beheld an old man sitting bolt upright and dressed in the usual priestly garb, his hands folded before him in prayer, and his head thrown slightly back, as if he had fallen asleep. Only by the hue on his face could we have told that he was really dead. Before him, fixed in the framework of the chair itself, was a short upright piece of wood with a crescent-shaped top, intended to serve as a rest for the chin in case his head should fall forward. What we had seen suggested a project we determined to carry out; we moved away at once, not wishing to give the impression that we proposed to be present at the ceremony of the morrow, lest the priests should take alarm at the prospect of having foreigners among their spectators and so hurry the performance over before our arrival. We did not even stay to copy the inscription on the coffin, but strolled away through the monastery grounds in an unconcerned manner.

We got up next morning in the cold, grey dawn of a January day, and after an early breakfast rowed quietly down to the jetty of the Ocean Banner monastery. To our great satisfaction but few children were about, and we passed quickly and noiselessly through the dark cloisters, until we reached the 'Abode of a Long Old Age,' arriving there about a quarter of an hour before the

appointed time. And now we had ample leisure to make a further inspection of the coffin and its occupant, a liberty resolutely opposed by a priest we found in attendance. He said that the last mass had been chanted for his dead brother's soul, and that no man might look on his face again unless through the flames which were to waft him into Nirvâna. We contented ourselves, therefore, by noting down that above the box and altar were two Chinese characters, signifying that the priest within was on his return journey to the west, to the land of Buddha; in other words, that he was dead. On each side hung a scroll, on which were written the following words:—

(1). 'Though the Trikāya\* be absolutely complete, the limit is not yet found.'

(2). 'It is the maturity of the Skandha† which alone can give perfection.'

The yellow strip of paper pasted on to the vertical slide above mentioned bore this inscription:—'The throne of intelligence‡ of the contemplative philosopher,

\* The *three bodies*—namely, *Dharmakāya*, or the spiritual body, which is permanent and indestructible; *Sambhōgākāya*, or the form which belongs to every Buddha as a reward for his merits, and is in due accordance therewith; and *Nirmānakāya*, or a body which has the power of assuming any shape for the purpose of propagating the doctrines of Buddhism.—EITEL's *Handbook of Buddhism*.

† Five attributes of every human being—namely, form, perception, consciousness, action, and knowledge. 'The union of these five attributes, which are considered as abstract qualities, and yet as forming the real constituents of every personality, dates from the moment of birth. Their full maturity brings on death.'—

DR. E. J. EITEL.

‡ Bôdhi.

the Bôdhisatva,\* the worthy Bikshu † ‘United Wisdom,’ ‡ now passed away.” While thus engaged we heard the harsh tones of the ‘wooden fish,’ § beaten to summon the priests to their morning meal, and about a quarter of an hour afterwards they begun one by one to drop in, each with his *kâchaya* or coloured stole hanging in readiness over one arm. Then ensued a series of prostrations on the circular rush mat placed in front of the altar and coffin; and every now and again some friendly hand would renovate the wick of the flickering lamp, that the spirit of the dead man might the better see to eat the food there laid out to comfort its hungry stomach. But these were merely private manifestations of feeling, and had nothing to do with the real ceremony of the day; and while not thus engaged, the priests, now collecting in large numbers, examined as usual the texture of our clothes, and asked a few of the well-known questions. One of them had only recently returned from a visit to Lhassa, the capital of Tibet, and the stronghold of that form of the Buddhist religion known as Lamaism. He said the Lamas had no wish to see foreigners there, and advised us strongly not to go, adding that there was no such trade as we had at Canton to attract us thither. Just at that moment it was announced that the abbot was coming; and immediately all the priests put on their

\* A being that has only once more to pass through human existence before it attains to Buddhahood.

† A priest or follower of Shâkyamuni.

‡ The dead man’s ‘monastic appellation’ mentioned above.

§ A piece of wood carved in the shape of a large-headed fish with a very wide mouth. See p. 93.

stoles, and arranged themselves decorously in two long rows, beginning from close alongside the coffin itself. In a few minutes the abbot was passing slowly between their ranks, his string of 108 beads\* in one hand, and in the other a small gong fixed into a framework of wood, having a clapper so attached that every turn of the hand produces a sound. He stopped in front of the altar and coffin, and there prostrated himself thrice, each time knocking his head upon the ground thrice, that being the number of obeisances performed before the Emperor of China, in the presence of death, and on other special occasions. He then rose, and at a given signal the whole body of priests broke forth into a chant or intonation of that portion of the Buddhist liturgy set apart as the service for the dead, the abbot himself adding to the general effect by a stroke every now and then upon his little hand-gong. When this was over two little ragged boys were chosen from among the now fast-increasing crowd, to each of whom was confided a streaming banner attached to the top of a light rod, ornamented with a blue and white spiral from top to bottom. Both banners bore the same legend :—‘Our humble trust is in Amida Buddha, our guide.’ These two boys were told off to head the procession ; and then four priests, whose special duty it is, seized the box which held the dead man and bound it to a couple of stout bamboo poles, by the aid of which they carried it very comfortably and gently between them, without any of the jogging so hateful to Chinese

\* Said to refer to the 108 compartments of the *phrabat*, or sacred footprint of Buddha.

sentiment. Following close upon the banners, the coffin-bearers themselves were followed by all the priests, walking two and two, and headed by the abbot, the whole company chanting in admirable time the words *Namah Amitâbha*—‘We humbly trust in Amida Buddha.’ A scuffling troop of idlers and children brought up our disorderly rear; and thus we passed along, before the ‘Gate of Death,’ through which the body of the priest had been carried two nights previously, and up the *Via Mortis*, or ‘Way of Death,’ a small lane leading from the old men’s quarters to the cremation-ground of the monastery, never used except upon such occasions as the present. On our way through the garden in which this lane terminated, we observed a black marble tablet standing in a little kiosque by the side of the path. This had been put up in memory of a white deer which had been presented to the monastery by a former Prefect of Canton, celebrated as being long a favourite with the son of its old master, and because on the very day on which the boy was subsequently cut off in the flower of his youth the affectionate creature laid down its head and died too—they said of a broken heart. We passed two of the substantial stone mausoleums into which are thrown, tied up in red bags, the collected ashes of cremated priests; but these are no longer in use, each having already received its full complement of 5,048 bags, and the little square port-holes at the side have been bricked up for the last time. Meanwhile, such remains of charred bones as are now gathered together after every cremation are reverently deposited in small urns and

piled in a temporary shed, with a slip of paper or memorandum attached to each, until sufficient money can be scraped together for the building of a new mausoleum. We had now arrived in front of the furnace, a low brick building, quite open on one side, and with apertures in two of the other three, for the purpose, we presume, of creating a proper draught. Within was already prepared a funeral pyre consisting of billets of thick wood, and on the top of these the coffin was placed ready for the fire. The priests ranged themselves in the form of a horse-shoe before the opening of the furnace, and once more began to chant some passage from their sacred books; and it was not until some ten minutes had elapsed that a novice lighted a long-handled torch and handed it respectfully to the abbot. The latter then stepped forward to a position immediately in front of the furnace, and there he slowly waved the torch several times round and round, uttering at the same time an invocation to Buddha and all the saints on behalf of the dead man's soul. While this was going on, the novice had crept into the furnace; and after gently raising the upper lid of the box, was busily engaged in inserting therein pieces of wood, apparently well oiled, together with other combustible material. By the time the abbot had finished his prayer, everything was in readiness; he then handed the torch back to the novice, who forthwith placed it below the pyre, where oil had evidently been poured over the dry twigs used for lighting the fire. In a moment arose a blaze, and the flames began almost instantaneously to roar fiercely upwards, devouring the thin planks of the box in which the

dead man was sitting. This was the signal for departure. One by one the priests stole away, not caring to participate too closely in the last scene of all, until at length only a few were left behind to collect with pious hands the *shê-li* \* of their departed brother. In less than two hours the fire had burnt itself out. The earthly remains of 'United Wisdom' were placed in the customary urn, and deposited in the temporary mausoleum; while his immortal soul had soared aloft to the promised land, there to partake of the infinite beatitude of Nirvâna.


\* The *s'arîra*, or relics, of the body of any cremated saint.

## ON CHINESE FANS.\*

IN China, just as the dragon is the symbol of power and the national emblem of the Chinese people, so is the fan the characteristic accompaniment to the every-day life of the ordinary Chinaman. It is, therefore possible that a few remarks from a purely Chinese standpoint may not be wholly out of place. For even in these days of advanced globe-trotting it is not every man's luck to get either to Corinth or to Peking; and the topic is one, moreover, to which the writer has personally devoted some attention. In his *Dictionary of the English Language*, Dr. Latham has ventured to define a fan as an 'instrument used by ladies to move the air and cool themselves;' a definition which is clearly bounded by the four walls of a European ball-room. All over the Asiatic continent fans are as much in use among men as among women; and in China, to which the following paper will be confined, a fan of some sort or other is part and parcel of every man's summer equipment. The term 'fan' is expressed in the Chinese language by the single and unchangeable character 扇, which in Mandarin is pronounced *shan*, the *a* having almost exactly the value of the *a* in 'can't.' This character is a compound of two others, namely 戸 *hu*

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(or *hoo*), 'a door,' and  *yü*, 'feathers.' These are here written in the modern style, said to be a gradual modification from the ancient hieroglyphs, under which form this same *hu* is believed actually to stand for the picture of one leaf of a door, and *yü* \* for that of the feathers or wings of a bird. From the conjunction of these two hieroglyphs we obtain, not a third hieroglyph—for no one pretends that any form of *shan*, ancient or modern, in any way resembles a fan—but an ideographic combination, analysis of which guides by association to the sense. Feathers beneath a door, door standing by synecdoche for a house: that which, made of feathers, is used within doors: *scilicet*, a fan. Such is a fair specimen of the process by which the ideographic nature of modern Chinese writing is worked out.† Whether this process can or cannot be held to fulfil the conditions of sound scientific investigation, and whether even the hieroglyphic value attributed to the original elements of such ideographs has or has not been seriously overrated by philologists, these are open questions; at the same time it is admitted on all sides that similar analyses, wherever feasible, afford great assistance to the student, and enable him to retain in the memory such a number of complex characters as would be perfectly impossible were each to be regarded as a tangled concourse of strokes, brought together without rhyme or reason at the sweet will of the Cadmus of China.

\* Here used as a contraction of a more complex character.

† It will be seen further on that fans are almost as much in requisition out of doors as within the house.

Another, and in the written language, equally common term for a fan, is *sha* (or *shah*),\* compounded of the same word *yü*, 'feathers,' placed above the character—also an ideograph—which stands for 'a female companion;' in other words, a woman fanning her lord, such indeed being one of the daily duties of the denizens of a Chinese harem. With regard to the constant use of the word 'feathers' in these combinations, it would appear from Chinese authorities that wings of birds and leaves of trees dispute, if not divide, the honour of having furnished the first fans to mankind. But Chinese authorities are eminently unreliable on most points, and the invention of the fan has been variously attributed to different heroes of antiquity, according to the fancy of each particular writer. For instance, the *Yu-hsüe* or Child's Guide to Knowledge, tells us that to the Emperor Hsien Yüan, who came to the throne B.C. 2697, we are indebted for this boon to suffering humanity; while the *Kuang-shih-lei-fu*, a well-known cyclopædia of antitheses, defers the invention to the reign of Wu-wang, the first ruler of the Chow dynasty, or more than a thousand years later. Other authorities declare for the

\* With regard to the two words *sha* and *shan*, it is stated in the *Fang-yen*, by Yang Hsiung, that the former is employed to the east, the latter to the west, of the Shan-hai-Kuan, or point at which the Great Wall of China abuts upon the sea coast, dividing Manchuria from the eighteen provinces.

It should also be mentioned that there is another character, similarly read *sha*, but differently written, which likewise means a fan. The two are given in dictionaries as separate words, but it is not improbable that they were originally the same.

Emperor Shun, B.C. 2255, with whose honoured name tradition has lovingly coupled more than one similar achievement designed to promote the welfare and happiness of his children. Of the history of fans in China, and their gradual development from the primitive bird's wing or unelaborated leaf, there is positively nothing to record, unless perhaps it be the publication by the Emperor Ngan Ti, of the Chin dynasty (A.D. 405),\* of a strange enactment against the use of silk in the manufacture of these articles. It was apparently a mere sumptuary law, having for its object the protection of silk, the material which, according to a very ancient belief still prevalent in China, can alone give warmth to the aged. In one of his dissertations on political economy, Mencius observed : † 'At fifty, without silk no warmth ; at seventy, without meat no satiety.' The sage had been advocating a more extensive cultivation of the mulberry tree, with a view to provide an adequate source of food for the silkworm ; and in the present instance it is most probable that the Imperial edict was directed against the indiscriminate waste of silk for purposes of mere luxury ; but like all similar enactments, this one fell speedily into desuetude.

Almost every large city in China, and certainly every important division of the empire, has its own characteristic fan ; or else there is something peculiar in the

\* Here again authorities are at variance. Hsieh Ling-Yün credits this enactment to the Emperor Hsiao Wu, of the same dynasty, who reigned from A.D. 373-397. The date given in the text is taken from the *Kuang-shih-lei-fu*.

† Book VII.

make, colour, or ornamentation of the common 'folding' fan as seen in that particular district, by which it may be distinguished from its ubiquitous congener. For the folding fan, as the Chinese call it, is the fan *par excellence*; and all that ingenuity of design has hitherto accomplished has not succeeded in displacing this convenient form from the affections of the people at large. The large palm-leaf, with its strongly-bound edges and natural handle, large quantities of which are exported annually from Canton and elsewhere, may possibly be the cheapest and most breeze-compelling of all kinds; but it is not very portable, and cannot readily be stowed away about the person, or stored so as to last into a second summer. It finds favour in the eyes of tea-shop and public eating-house keepers, and is always to be seen in the guest chambers, whether of guilds, monasteries, or private establishments. The folding fan, on the other hand, occupies but little space; and, when not in use, may be stuck in the high-boot of the full-dressed Chinese gentleman, or at the back of the neck in the loose collarless jacket, which, with the addition of a curt *caleçon*, constitutes the entire toilette of a Chinese coolie. Besides, the folding fan opens into a tolerably smooth surface, fairly well adapted for the painter's art; and even the dirtiest specimen of Chinese vagabondage loves to rest his eye upon some gaily painted flower or a spray or two of the much-prized bamboo. Consequently, the folding fan obtains all over the eighteen provinces of China Proper, and beyond, far away across the Great Wall, over the steppes of Mongolia and the mountains

of Tibet. Of the more elaborate kinds, produced at Canton for export to Europe, with their exquisitely carved or perforated ivory handles, etc., it will suffice to say that such are quite unknown even in the highest and wealthiest circles of Chinese society, the folding fan being rarely the vehicle of extravagant expenditure in this respect. It may be made, indeed, either of paper or of silk ; for handle, ivory or sandal-wood may be used ; but even then the general get-up is, as a rule, plain, while for the common folding fan of the empire, bamboo is the material most extensively employed, being at once the cheapest and most durable of all woods. Pendants of amber, jade, ivory, cornelian, and other substances, are also affected by the more refined ; and a fan case beautifully embroidered in some quaint pattern, accompanied perhaps by some appropriate classical allusion, is a very ordinary birthday present from a sister to her brother, or from a wife to her husband. The number of 'bones' \* or ribs to a folding fan is a matter which is by no means left to chance. Sixteen, including the two outer pieces, may be quoted as the standard ; but fans made in certain localities have more, as many as thirty-two, and sometimes even thirty-six. The reason why the number sixteen is preferred is that such a fan opens into a convenient number of spaces to receive the poetical inscription which custom has almost, but not altogether, tied down to a given number of lines.

Irregular inscriptions are, however, not uncommon.

\* This again is a translation of the Chinese term.

The Hang-chow fan has a great many bones. It is a very strongly made article; and though only of paper, prepared in some way with oil, may remain plunged in water (it is said) for twenty-four hours without injury. But this fan finds no favour with those who can afford to pick and choose, and for a rather singular reason. Just as with the Chinese white is the emblem of death and mourning, so black is regarded as typical of moral impurity, and black things are consequently avoided on the strength of the proverb, 'Proximity to vermilion makes a man red; to ink, black.' Now the Hang-chow fan is, with the exception of a sprinkling of gold or silver on the face, as black as it well could be; and it is therefore at a discount even among those by whom the most trifling form of economy cannot be satisfactorily ignored.\* Chair coolies, everywhere a degraded class, invest their money in these fans without hesitation, doubtless feeling themselves beyond the reach of such influences as these. Old men, too, may use black fans without scruple. Their age is held to have placed them on a vantage ground in this as in all other respects; for, as Confucius observed, 'That which is really white may be in the darkest dye without being made black;' † and a man who has led for years a spotless life is unlikely to be influenced for the bad by mere contact with a fan. Black fans, with black lacquer handles, are made in Canton for sale to the outer

\* So punctilious, indeed, is a respectable Chinaman in the case of mourning, that he will even abstain from chewing betel-nut, because it would make his lips red, and red is emblematical of joy.

† See the *Lun-yü*, Book XVII., ch. 7.

barbarian, the hated foreigner, whose moral obliquity is regarded by the masses of China as more *prononcé* than that of the lowest of their low.

Besides the large non-folding feather fan, generally looked upon in Europe as a hand screen for the fire, some beautiful specimens of the folding fan are also to be seen in feathers, which show, on being opened, beautifully painted bouquets of flowers, butterflies, birds, etc., etc. Kingfishers' feathers and beetles' wings are also largely employed in the manufacture of fans and screens, and tortoise-shell and jade are occasionally used in elaborating the handles of the more expensive kinds. White silk, stretched tightly over both sides of a narrow frame—round, octagonal, sexagonal, or polygonal, as the case may be—forms what is considered in the higher circles of Chinese society the *ne plus ultra* of elegance and refinement; especially so when some charming study in flower or landscape painting on the obverse is accompanied by a sparkling stanza on the reverse, signed by the writer and addressed to the friend for whose delectation it is intended. This is a very favourite present among the Chinese; and as poets and painters are but a small minority in China, as elsewhere, it follows that any man who is sufficiently an artist to supply either the verses or the design need never starve for want of occupation. One of the highest officials and most renowned calligraphists in the Chinese empire at the present moment, when formerly a struggling student at Foochow, eked out a scanty livelihood by writing inscriptions for fans in all kinds of styles, ancient and

modern, at about one shilling and eightpence per fan. Outside his door was a notice calling the attention of the public to the above fact, and the fancy name he gave to his studio was 'Laugh, but Buy.'

That kind known as the 'Swatow' fan is for a non-folding fan perhaps the most serviceable of all, as for lightness and durability combined it is certainly without a rival. It is formed from a piece of bamboo, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length and half an inch in diameter, split two-thirds of the way down into a number of slips, each very thin and apparently fragile, while really possessed of its full share of the strength and flexibility of the parent stem. These slips are spread out in the same plane, with their tips slightly bent over, somewhat like a mustard-spoon; and then strong paper is pasted over the whole as far down as the splits extend, the remaining unsplit half serving as handle. This fan is said to be actually made near Amoy, probably near Chang-chow, and to be sent to Swatow only to be painted; but to foreigners resident in China it is universally known as the 'Swatow' fan. Of all fancy fans there is none so curious as what is commonly termed the 'broken fan,' which at first sight would appear to be a simple folding fan, and on being opened from left to right as usual discloses nothing to distinguish it from the most ordinary kind. Opened, however, the reverse way, from right to left, the whole fan seems to have fallen to pieces, each bone, with the part attached to it, being separated from all the others, as if the connecting strings were broken. This arrangement is of course simple enough, but at first



sight the effect, as a trick, is remarkably good. From the broken it is an easy transition to the secret or *double-entendre* fan, which opened one way shows a flower or similarly harmless design ; the other, some ribald sketch which with us would entail severe penalties on maker, publisher, and all concerned. It is only fair, however, to the administration of China to state that, theoretically speaking, the same penalties would be incurred, though practically they are seldom if ever enforced. In the Peking form of this fan there are always two such pictures to each. These are not seen when the fan is opened out, and it will only open one way ; but are disclosed by turning back the two end ribs or 'bones.' A far more creditable and more useful *compagnon de voyage* is the map fan, which gives the plan of some such great city as Peking or Canton, with the names of the streets and public buildings marked in characters of medium legibility. Sometimes whole districts are included on the surface of a fan ; and as the distances from place to place are given with considerable accuracy, travellers not unusually invest the small sums required for the purchase of these topographical guides. So, too, any great national event may be circulated over the empire by means of fans, precisely as penny books of the Lord Mayor's Show are still sold in Fleet Street on every 9th November. The Tientsin Massacre, for instance, brought forth a hideous specimen, with horrid details of the hacking to pieces of Roman Catholic priests and sisters, the burning of the cathedral and of the French Consulate, the murder of the French Consul and his

*chancelier*. The sale of these fans was almost immediately prohibited by the Chinese authorities, and they are now very rare.

Some 'fans' are not fans at all. The 'steel fan' is simply a bar of metal, shaped and painted to resemble an ordinary closed fan, and carried sometimes as a life-preserver, sometimes by the swell mobsmen and rowdies of China, to be used at close quarters with murderous effect. Of the same species is the well-known 'dagger fan,' which consists of an elegant imitation in lacquer of a common folding fan, but is really a sheath containing within its fair exterior a deadly blade, short and sharp, like a small Malay *kris*. This dagger fan was invented by the Japanese, and its importation into China has always been strictly forbidden. Great numbers have, however, been successfully introduced into Canton, Foochow, and other large maritime cities, and they are now even manufactured by the enterprising natives of the first-mentioned port.

A curious specimen of the fan is produced in Formosa, consisting of a thick pithy leaf, shaped like a cone with the apex chopped off, and a short handle fitted to the line of severance, and bearing upon its face a landscape or group of figures burnt in with a hot iron. It was the invention of a needy scholar of Taiwan Fu, the capital city of Formosa, who being in distressed circumstances hit upon the above novelty as a means of replenishing his empty purse. The fan took immensely for a time, long enough in fact to make the fortune of the inventor, who for a considerable period was at his wits' end to meet the

demand. The rage for them has been now for some time spent, and they are only made in small quantities, for sale more as curiosities than anything else. For there are fashions in fans as in other articles of human luxury in China as elsewhere. Every year sees some fresh variety, differing perhaps imperceptibly to the European eye from the favourite of the preceding season, but still sufficiently so to constitute a novelty—a new fashion for the wealthy Chinese exquisite. A foreigner may live for years amongst the Chinese and never notice any change to relieve the monotony of their dress. Yet, as a matter of fact, some variety, even of hat or shoes, is introduced almost annually. The fashionable cap is squarer or rounder at the top as the case may be; the shoes more or less pointed, or ornamented after some novel design. And so it is with fans, which are made of different material and of different sizes for different seasons of the year in proportion to the quantity of breeze required. In the *Miscellanies of the Western Capital*\* we read:—‘The fans of the Son of Heaven are, for the summer, of feathers; for the winter, of silk;’ and in a poem by Ou-yang Hsiu occurs this line:—

In the tenth moon the people of the capital turn to their warm fans.

At the present day the distinction between warm and cold fans can hardly be said to exist. Those for spring

\* Ch‘ang-an, now Hsi-an Fu, the capital of the province of Shensi.

and autumn are smaller than those used in summer, reminding one of the old Roman luxury of summer and winter rings. It is also *mauvais ton* to be seen with a fan too early or too late in the year. There are indeed no days absolutely fixed for the beginning and end of the fan season, as in the case of the summer and winter hats worn by all employés of the Government, and which are supposed to be changed simultaneously all over the empire; but Chinese custom has made it as ridiculous for a man to carry a fan before or after a certain conventional date as it would be with us to wear a white waistcoat in March or November.

During the summer months a bird's-eye view of China would disclose a perfect flutter of fans from one confine to the other. Punkahs are unknown to the Chinese, except as an innovation of the foreigner; and it has been necessary to coin a term expressly for them. Occasionally they may be seen in the house of some wealthy Chinese merchant—as, for instance, in the establishment of the celebrated Howqua family at Canton—but even then they are regarded more as a curiosity than as appliances of every-day use. On the other hand, it can hardly be said that the idea of a general fan or punkah has escaped the searching ingenuity of the Chinese; for in the work last quoted we are informed that ‘under the Han dynasty [between sixteen hundred and two thousand years ago] there lived at Ch’ang-an a very skilful workman, named Ting Huan, who made a seven-wheel fan. This consisted of seven large wheels, ten feet in diameter, joined together, the whole being

turned by a single man, and keeping the place quite cool during the summer months.' This description is a trifle too meagre to enable us to state with certainty the exact shape of the machine in question. The paddle-wheel of a steamer seems to come the nearest to it; and from the loftiness of Chinese halls and reception rooms in general, both official and private, no objection could be offered on the score of height. Be this as it may, such a machine would at any rate be free from what is in Chinese eyes the weak point of a punkah, namely, its position with regard to the person operated upon. A Chinaman fans his face, arms, legs, chest, and even back, as he may feel disposed at the moment; but he objects strongly to a draught of air falling on the top of his head, and avoids it as much as possible. At meals, during the very hot weather, servants usually stand behind their masters and slowly but steadily ply the large feather fan, originally made from the feathers of a pheasant's tail, because the Emperor Kao Tsung of the Yin\* dynasty on one occasion connected some fortunate event with the auspicious crowing of a pheasant.† Burden-carrying coolies of the lowest stratum of Chinese society fan themselves as they hurry along the streets weighed down by their back-breaking loads. Little boys are engaged to fan the workmen whose business is carried on in the hot shops of a crowded Chinese city. The very soldiers in

\* More commonly known as Wu Ting, B.C. 1324-1265.

† This story is told by Ts'ui Pao in his *Ku-chin-chu*, or 'Antiquarian Researches.'

the ranks fan themselves on parade; and among the insignia carried in the procession of every mandarin above a certain rank there is to be found a huge wooden fan more resembling a banner than anything else. And this brings us to a rather curious phrase of Chinese etiquette. A Chinaman on horseback or in a sedan chair, meeting an equal of his acquaintance on foot, must forthwith dismount, be it only to make a passing bow. It is a serious breach of politeness to remain sitting while the person to whom you are addressing yourself stands. And, similarly, two friends meeting in chairs should, strictly speaking, both dismount to salute. But to avoid the obvious inconvenience of perpetually stopping and dismounting, in perhaps a crowded thoroughfare, at the appearance of every friend, it has been arranged that the occupant, say of the chair, may hold his fan up so as to screen his face from view, and the two pass without further ceremony—as if, in fact, they had never met. And such is the use to which, apart from their emblematical signification, the above-mentioned wooden fans would be put should the almost impossible contingency arise of two mandarins of equal rank meeting face to face in the street. The servants of each would hasten to interpose these great fans between the passing chairs of their respective masters, who, by the aid of this pleasant fiction, would be held not to have become aware of each other's presence. A subordinate would turn up a side street and yield the road to his superior officer.

Formerly there was a certain kind of fan specially

used as a screen to 'separate the sun, screen off the wind, and obstruct the dust,' just as well-to-do Chinamen now use the ordinary fan to save their half-shaven heads from the scorching summer rays while they stroll along or hurry by on business or pleasure bent. The common coolie has his wide mushroom-shaped hat, and the official rides in a sedan-chair with his red umbrella carried like the wooden fan in procession before him; but the middle-class Chinaman, who may be unwilling to throw away money in chair hire, trusts to his fan alone. As a matter of fact, from the narrowness of the streets in most Chinese cities, and the matting with which these streets are in many cases roofed over, sufficient shade is afforded to enable persons to move freely about without further defence against the sun; and for a walk across country the inevitable umbrella would of course be called into play—no longer, however, the characteristic model of antiquity, with clumsy handle and coarse oil-cloth top, but some cheap importation in European style, the convenience of which in point of portability has long since been recognised by the Chinese. In such a city as Canton two open umbrellas would more than fill the narrow roadway, and the risk of constant collision would be great; consequently, umbrellas are only to be seen on wet days, when the ordinary crowd is at a minimum. Even in Peking, where some of the streets are as wide as Regent Street, the convenience of the fan recommends it as a sunshade in preference to the more unwieldy umbrella.

The fan plays no inconsiderable *rôle* in Chinese decorative art. Besides being the vehicle of both poetry and painting, it is itself often introduced into designs of all kinds. Mullioned windows are not unusually made in the shape of the top part of a folding fan spread out—that is, the paper or silk part without the ribs; and the full outline is often used to contain pictures or verses painted or inscribed upon walls, as if an open fan had simply been nailed over the spot. History indeed has recorded the case of one painter, Wang Yüan-chün, who so excelled in this particular line that people, like the birds pecking at the grapes of Apelles, would often try to take down and examine more closely some of these beautiful specimens of wall painting, which appeared to be really fans hung up by a thread or attached to a nail. It has been mentioned above that, with the more refined of the Chinese, fans, including both the ‘screen’ and the ‘folding’ varieties, are almost invariably painted on one side and left blank on the other for the insertion of some appropriate verses, which may be either original or borrowed; from which it will be seen that fans occupy to some extent in China the position of albums with us. To give any idea of the quaint designs in figure and landscape painting, the marvellous birds, beasts, and insects—especially butterflies—which are to be found on the more highly finished Chinese screens, is next to impossible without reproducing the originals; but a few words on the versification just alluded to, and on the fan language in general, may not be uninteresting to some. There is, however, in the long list of fan-painting



celebrities the name of one single artist, the nature of whose works is expressed by a term with which they have ever been associated in history. That term is '10,000 *li*,' or a distance of over 3,000 English miles. The painter in question was named Wang Fei; and the extent of a landscape he was able to produce on the surface of a mere ordinary fan was said to be limited only by the hyperbolical range of 10,000 *li*.

The fan is metaphorically known in the Chinese language as the 'Phoenix Tail' or the 'Jay's Wing,' terms which point to what were possibly the archetypes of all fans—namely, the wings and tails of birds, from which has been developed the modern feather fan. The folding fan, by the way, is said by one authority\* not to be a Chinese invention at all, but to have been introduced into China by the Coreans, who sent a quantity of them to the Emperor Yung Lo of the Ming dynasty, amongst the other articles offered as tribute by the vassal State. The Emperor is further stated to have been so pleased with the novelty that orders were issued for their imitation by Chinese workmen. A fan is also alluded to in figurative language as a 'strike the butterfly,' or a 'chase the flies,' as a 'like the moon,' or a 'call the wind,' and as a 'screen the face,' a name which should be taken in conjunction with the point of etiquette previously mentioned. It is called a 'change the season,' from its power of cooling the person fanned. This power has been enlarged upon in an ode to a fan, written

\* The *Ch'ien-ch'o-lei-shu*, an encyclopædia published in 1632.

by a poet named Poh Chü-I,\* of which the following are specimen lines :—

With thee, hot suns shall strike in vain the snow ;  
By thy aid gentle gales perennial blow ;  
Thou mov'st an autumn breeze 'neath summer skies ;  
Cease, and the round moon in my bosom lies.

From the last line of this effusion, which, as a translation, aims only at literal fidelity to the original, it is clear that the particular kind of fan here alluded to must be the round screen fan, which Chinese poets never tire of comparing with the full moon, and which, when not in use, is often laid 'in the bosom,' between the folds of the flowing outer robe. As to inscriptions upon fans, they vary with every variety of human thought and feeling. The more usual kind treats in stilted language, pregnant with classical quotation and obscure historical allusion, of some one of the ever-changing aspects of nature. Others, again, are didactic ; and some are literary *tours de force*, occasionally of a not very high order. The most celebrated of the latter class has been acknowledged by universal consent to be a couplet consisting of only eight characters, written at the eight corners of an octagon fan belonging to the Emperor Chien Wên, of the Liang dynasty,† and said to have been the composition of the monarch himself. The peculiarity of this couplet is that the reader may begin at any one of the eight characters, and by reading round the way of the sun find a couplet of perfect sense and

\* Flourished A.D. 772–846.

† Reigned A.D. 550–551.

perfectly rhymed. Yet of all inscriptions on or about fans in China, few are to be compared in point of pathos and poetic vigour with a certain stanza penned many centuries ago by a favourite of the Emperor Ch'êng Ti, of the Han dynasty.\* The lady in question, whose name was Pan, had been for some time the *confidante* of his Majesty, and the queen of the Imperial seraglio, and appears to have believed that something more than an ordinary attachment of the hour existed between herself and the Son of Heaven. Gradually, however, she began to find that her influence was on the wane, and at length, unable to bear any longer her mortification and grief, she forwarded to the Emperor a circular screen fan, on one side of which was inscribed the following lines:—

O fair white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom,  
Clear as the frost, bright as the winter snow—  
See, friendship fashions out of thee a fan;  
Round as the round moon shines in heaven above;  
At home, abroad, a close companion thou;  
Stirring at every move the grateful gale.  
And yet I fear, ah me! that autumn chills,  
Cooling the dying summer's torrid rage,  
Will see thee laid neglected on the shelf,  
All thought of by-gone days, like them, by-gone.

Since the date of this poem, a deserted wife has constantly been spoken of as an 'autumn fan.'†

\* Reigned B.C. 32-6.

† For another specimen see p. 320.

## MESMERISM, PLANCHETTE, AND SPIRITUALISM IN CHINA.\*

### I. MESMERISM.

IN Vol. 1., p. 265, of the celebrated *Lettres édifiantes, écrites des Missions étrangères*, published in 1808, occurs the passage of which the following is a translation :

People would have us believe that there is no science or art useful to mankind which was not invented in China many centuries before Europeans had even thought of it. It is, at any rate, easy to prove that the discovery of animal magnetism belongs to the Chinese, and that with them this art reaches back to a considerable antiquity, and that even at the present day the Taoist bonzes† show themselves far superior therein to our Mesmer and other French professors of magnetism, as well in theory as in practice.

It is not necessary here to dwell upon the now exploded belief that all our great European inventions and discoveries have been anticipated in China. Modern investigation has systematically tended to prove that, except in the matter of printing,‡ China has no claim whatever to the honours which have been gratuitously

\* Reprinted from *Fraser*, by permission of the Editor.

† Priests of the religion of *Tao*, or, as it is sometimes called, *Rationalism*, which was founded by Lao-tzu six centuries before the Christian era, and still flourishes over the Chinese Empire, though under a corrupted form. See pp. 14, 36.

‡ The Chinese are said to have printed from wooden blocks as early as A.D. 581, and from movable type in 1040. See p. 52.

showered upon her. And even where she did anticipate in discovery, she was speedily outstripped in practice; and it has remained for foreigners of the present day to exhibit to the Chinese beautiful and extensive founts of Chinese characters, issued at a trifling cost when compared with anything of the kind that they themselves have been able to produce. The ordinary edition of the *Peking Gazette*,\* the official organ of a multitudinous, multifarious empire, the integrality of which is cemented by the common bond of a written language intelligible to all alike,† is a dirty-looking little pamphlet, so ill printed as to be in many places quite illegible.

But to resume: the worthy father above quoted goes on to say (p. 266), 'What we call magnetism in France is known as *cong-fou* in China;' or, as we should write it, according to the most recent English orthography, *kang-fu*. The first half of this term, *kang-fu*, occurs for the first time in a work on alchemy which dates from the second century of our era, and is there applied to the constellation of the Great Bear; the latter half signifies (1) a bamboo tally, and (2) a charm against evil spirits. The two words taken together stand for a kind of religious

\* Published daily. See p. 59.

† Mencius observed that all the axle-trees of carts in China were precisely of the same length, and that in all books the same characters were used. Thus Chinese who speak different dialects, amounting practically to totally distinct languages, and who are mutually unintelligible by word of mouth, study the same books and read the same novels. It is now only partially true that axle-trees are of the same length. Varieties are to be found in certain provinces, and carts arriving from distant parts are fitted with the local regulation size as occasion may require.

pathology, formerly much in vogue with the Chinese, and adopted simultaneously with medical treatment, but now for a long time prohibited by the authorities as a sham and an outrage upon common sense, besides being calculated to lead to very serious abuses. Consequently, *kang-fu* is rarely practised at the present day, and then only in secret; and books on the subject, once to be picked up at any stall, are now extremely difficult to procure.

To the priests of Tao, the religion of Pure Reason, who dabbled under by-gone dynasties in alchemy and in the science of attaining immortality, is due the discovery of *kang-fu* and its application as a means of healing the sick. All complaints are held to be equally amenable to its power, though not all persons; professors of the art stating plainly that *kang-fu* can exercise no influence whatever over others than those who have faith. The *modus operandi* is as follows:—A Taoist priest, known for his skill in the art, is requested to attend at the house of a sick person for the purpose of administering *kang-fu*; and accordingly, after arranging what is to be paid for his services and securing part of the sum in advance, he proceeds to fit up within the patient's room an altar for burning incense and joss-paper and for worship generally. Muttered incantations follow, as the priest walks slowly and with prescribed steps round and round the room. By-and-by, he approaches the sick man and partly raises him, or turns him on his back or side, or lifts up a leg or an arm, or gently shampoos him, the object being all the time to bring the sick man's

mind into *rapport* with his own. When the priest thinks he has accomplished this, he commands the patient to perspire or to become cool, or gives instructions for the regulation of pulse and heart, in each case according to what he conceives to be the exigencies of the disease. The whole scene is rendered as impressive as possible by silence, and by darkening the room, with the exception of one oil-lamp by the light of which is dimly visible the silhouette of the robed priest waving his large sleeves in the air. The imaginative faculty of the sick man is thus excited; and hence, perhaps, the reason why even in these days of prohibition Chinamen may still be found ready to declare that they (generally, however, their friends or relatives) have derived undoubted benefits from a well-timed administration of *kang-fu*. All my own attempts to be present at such a scene have hitherto proved unsuccessful; and the above account is gathered chiefly from conversation, aided by a few stray hints gleaned from Taoist pamphlets which contained allusions to the subject. That something akin to mesmerism is even now practised in China appears to be beyond all doubt; but until closer investigation shall have shown what that is, the subject must remain, where I am now compelled to leave it, in the category of things unknown.

## II. PLANCHETTE.

Of Planchette, I have a more interesting tale to tell.

The Chinese word *chi*, of which 'Planchette' is a fair translation, occurs in the *Shuo Wên*, which was published in A.D. 100, and was the first lexicon systematically

arranged according to certain elements common to certain groups of characters. It is there defined as 'to inquire by divination upon uncertain matters.' This might of course include other forms of divination; but in the *Liao-Chai-Chih-I*, a well-known work completed exactly two hundred years ago, and of which a translation is now in the hands of English readers,\* there are two stories which leave no doubt that at any rate at that more recent date the term in question was used precisely in the sense of our own 'Planchette.' It has indeed been for some time known to residents in and writers on China, that Planchette is commonly practised in certain parts of the empire by the people at large as a ready and efficacious means of inquiring into the future on miscellaneous topics of immediate importance to the inquirer, and by the cunning priests who run the tables as a sure and certain method of procuring a handsome addition to the annual income of their temples. No one, however, appearing to have made a personal investigation of the process,† I determined to make arrangements for being present myself at a *séance*, simply with the view of discovering what there was in the practice of this art powerful enough to induce the thrifty Chinaman to part so easily with his hard-earned strings of cash. For this purpose I had the advantage of being stationed at Amoy, which, according

\* *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio.*

† The Rev. Mr. Doolittle has given a short account of Planchette in his *Social Life of the Chinese*, with such inaccuracies of detail as would be inseparable from any version founded on mere inquiry.



to the Chinese, shares with Foochow the honour of being the earliest and most prosperous home of Planchette. I therefore arranged through the medium of a friendly literate, that on a certain October afternoon I was to visit both the principal temples in Amoy at which such tables are to be found, first pledging my word that I would neither laugh at anything I might see nor commit any act likely to disturb the solemnity of the proceedings. This promise it was indeed hardly necessary to exact, for, to begin with, any disorderly behaviour in a place of worship would have laid me open to the pains and penalties enacted in Clause 100 of the Order in Council of March 9, 1865, against British subjects 'guilty of publicly deriding, mocking, or insulting any religion established or observed in China or in Japan, or of publicly offering any insult to any religious service, feast, or ceremony established or kept in any part of China or in Japan, etc., etc. ;' and, secondly, an unfriendly demonstration on my part would have been at once resisted by the priests, a row would have ensued, and the mocking foreigner would have fared badly at the hands of an excited Chinese mob. For in China Planchette is carried on in the full light of day, just within the entrance to the temple, at the foot of an altar upon which is seated, amidst burning sticks of incense and slender tallow candles, the God who presides over the table. Immediately behind is another and a larger altar, and thereon are ranged images of the various deities whose worship is most affected in that particular establishment.

Accompanied by my friend, Mr. R. H. Pye, armed with a pencil and a sketch-book, I was ushered on arrival at the first temple into the guest-chamber, where we were to await the return of one of the performers who, it was averred, had gone out for a short time, but would soon be back. The usual cup of fragrant yellow tea was served, but as the guest-chamber soon became intolerably hot, we strolled out among the rapidly increasing crowd to examine the appointments of the temple. At the back of the principal shrine were some half-dozen noisy Chinamen sitting round a table playing the favourite game of 'Promotion,'\* the priests taking a small fee for the use of the apparatus and for the tea supplied. One of these gamblers kindly accommodated me with a fan, upon the back of which was a rather curious inscription in seven lines, of fifteen characters to each line :—

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of war cannot appreciate the happiness of peace ;

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of desolation and famine cannot appreciate the happiness of plenty ;

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of separation and death cannot appreciate the happiness of reunion with friends ;

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of misfortune and sorrow cannot appreciate the happiness of repose ;

\* Somewhat akin to our Race Game, in that the forward or backward movements of each player depend upon throws with dice. For the racecourse, however, the Chinese substitute their official arena, in which the successful player advances rapidly to the post of Secretary of State, while his less fortunate opponents lag behind in subordinate positions, or are degraded to the lowest ranks in the Chinese official scale.

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of hunger and cold cannot appreciate the happiness of repletion and warmth ;

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of disease and pain cannot appreciate the happiness of health and strength ;

Those who have not experienced the bitterness of dangers by land and sea cannot appreciate the happiness of safety and quiet.

Meanwhile, the heat grew absolutely stifling, while the errant professor of Planchette showed no signs of returning ; and it soon became clear that the proprietors of this table had not the remotest intention of initiating us outer barbarians into the occult mysteries of its operation. We therefore informed the priests that we would call again, and forthwith directed the steps of our chair-bearers towards the second temple, where a similar table was to be found. Here again the aspect of things seemed against us, for exactly in front of the temple a large crowd had gathered to watch an open-air theatrical performance that happened to be going on. And in a moment the 'funny man' of the piece was debiting his jokes to himself and his brother actors, the crowd having faced round as one man with a view of following us into the temple. About one hundred and fifty or so got in before the great gates could be closed, and there we were in a more stifling atmosphere than ever, and so far without having accomplished anything. This time we declined both tea and guest-chamber, and sat down on a bench drawn up to within a few feet of the Planchette table. We began by inquiring if the *séance* could not be held

in a private room to avoid the pressure of the crowd; but we were informed that to remove the table from its divine surroundings would be tantamount to depriving the performance of its very essence of success. Then followed a long confabulation between our guide and the priests, at which it was definitely arranged that a *séance* should take place at once, on condition that we engaged solemnly to take everything with becoming gravity, and to subscribe to a fund for certain repairs to the roof, through which, we were told, the rain-drops now actually leaked on to the sacred head of the Goddess of Mercy. And as an earnest of good faith the priests requested that any subject upon which we desired a spiritual communication should be written down on a slip of paper and reverently laid at the feet of the God. Thereupon I advanced with due solemnity towards a small writing-table at the side of the altar, and wrote down in Chinese this sentence :—

A humble disciple ventures to inquire if he will win a stake in the forthcoming Manila lottery.

Then, standing before the table, I raised the slip of paper, as previously instructed, to my head, and finally deposited it upon the altar directly in front of the image of Na-ch'a,\* after which I resumed my seat. Five to ten

\* A member of the Chinese Pantheon held in high honour at Amoy. He was born in a ball-shaped covering, which his father, a high military official, clove in two with his sword; and being subsequently deified, his name is now to be found in the 'List of the Gods.'

minutes now elapsed, and meanwhile the writing implement was placed upon the table. It consisted simply of a gaily painted natural fork, cut from some slender willow sapling—differing, however, from a simple fork in that exactly at the point of bifurcation a short thick stump projected at right angles to the plane of the two arms. This stump was also part of the natural growth, rounded off to a blunt point so as to form a kind of pencil. A small packet of clean sand was next poured out in the middle of the table, and the writing implement was so arranged that its pencil-tip lay buried in the heap. The crowd now parted, and three respectable-looking Chinamen walked up towards the table, where they began by making, each of them, several profound prostrations. Two of them then grasped the arms of the writing implement, while the other took his seat at the secretary's desk alongside. An attendant priest seized a bundle of gilt joss-paper, and, casting a look round to see that all was ready, plunged it into the flame of a lamp burning upon the altar. Simultaneously the men who held the writing implement began to work it so that the vertically placed tip sped rapidly round and round in a circle of about a foot in diameter, scattering the heap of sand from the middle all over the table. This movement was continued for several minutes without intermission, the priest who was burning the paper occasionally relieving the monotony of the scene by holding a piece directly over the Planchette or close under the nostrils of Na-ch'a himself. No one uttered a word as the implement went on spinning round and round, until at

length the two men who were driving the pencil became suddenly possessed with the divine influence. The circular movement was arrested; and the pencil, without any apparent effort on the part of the performers, who seemed to be in a kind of ecstasy, rapidly traced a single Chinese word, upon the completion of which inspiration ceased, and the writing implement was whisked round and round as before. This word was written in what is commonly termed the 'grass character,' a cursive style of writing, in the execution of which it is not necessary to take the pencil from the surface employed. For in the ordinary style of Chinese writing as many separate efforts of the hand are required to form a single character as there are strokes in that character; and the number of these strokes ranges from a minimum of *one* to a maximum of over *fifty* in a single word—the average number, however, being from seven to nine. It was hardly completed ere several of the bystanders had already identified it, including the secretary himself, who proceeded to write the word down, while the writing implement continued its course. Shortly afterwards there was another pause; a second character was formed, and then a third, and so on, the intervals between the formation of each being not necessarily equidistant, but depending entirely upon the inspiration accorded to the performers. Thus the *séance* progressed, until at length the secretary handed to me a perfect stanza of Chinese verse in four columns of seven characters to each, with the proper rhymes and tones—no easy task to accomplish—

in the proper places. The following is a doggerel but word-for-word rendering :—

The pulse of human nature throbs from England to Cathay,  
And gambling mortals ever love to swell their gains by play;  
For gold, in this vile world of ours, is everywhere a prize—  
A thousand taels\* shall meet the prayer that on this altar lies.

The explanation of this scene is simple enough. The query, placed before the performance at the feet of the God, was secretly and rapidly communicated by an accomplice to the paid improvisatore employed by the priests, themselves too illiterate for any such severe literary test. Some five minutes or so were then consumed before an actual start was made, and it was at least three or four minutes after that before the first character appeared in the sand. Still, keeping in mind the trammels of Chinese prosody, the performance was a creditable one and quite sufficient to impose on the gaping crowd around us. Even when our response had been received in full, the implement did not stop, but went on to respond to another query which some one else had meanwhile taken the opportunity to propose. We, however, did not deem it worth while to wait for any further manifestations, but departed, quite satisfied with the result of our visit. The versified response to our query was clearly not a bogus composition, as evidenced by the introduction of the Chinese equivalent for England (*viz.*, *Ying*), and its general appositeness as a reply. It must have been prepared on

\* A tael is one Chinese ounce weight (of silver), and as the prizes of the Manila lottery are calculated in dollars, this may be considered as a slip on the part of the God.

the spur of the moment, *stans pede in uno*, and recalled the famous Chinese poet of old, who is said to have composed an impromptu quatrain while taking seven ordinary paces.

### III. SPIRITUALISM.

The spirits of the unseen universe are directly invoked by the Chinese, chiefly in cases of illness. In matters which involve merely pecuniary interests, such means as Planchette and various other indirect ways of consulting the oracle are preferred, being at once simpler and less costly to the inquirer. A man who wishes to learn the probable result of an enterprise he has in view, will drop into some roadside temple and will lay a small fee upon the altar. The attendant priest lights a fresh candle or a new stick of incense; and the suppliant, after making the usual series of prostrations, reverently takes with both hands a kidney-shaped piece of wood which has been split into two halves so that each half shall have one flat and one convex side. These are raised above the head and dropped to the ground before the altar; and from the combination which results, namely (1) two convexes, (2) two flats, or (3) a flat and a convex, a propitious or unpropitious answer is deduced, being (1) negative, (2) indifferent, and (3) affirmative, respectively. The more elaborate method, or that form known in Europe as spiritualism, is to engage the services of a medium, generally a Taoist priest, whose body is for the time being occupied by the God. This state of divine 'possession' is brought about in the following manner. The medium takes a seat, while his brother priests or



confederates arrange the usual altar, light candles, and burn incense, and invoke the presence of the deity required. After a short interval, one of them advances towards the medium and performs certain movements, apparently mesmeric passes, by which a state of unconciousness is induced; whereupon the God takes possession of the temporarily unoccupied body. From that moment every word uttered by the medium is held to be divinely inspired, or, more properly, the very words of the God, who simply uses the medium as his mouthpiece.

In the Chinese work above mentioned\* there is a story of a medium, employed to stimulate the people of a certain district to subscribe towards the restoration of a temple, who in his ecstasy blurted out not only that the directors had embezzled some of the money already collected, but that he himself had positively shared in the spoil. When the spirit left him, and he heard of the charge brought by himself against himself, he was sorely ashamed, and refunded the money at once, the whole being nothing more than a clever trick to prove the efficacy of the medium. In the same work will be found an account of *dark séances* in China, which, besides dating back at least as far as 1679, has the further advantage of coming direct from the pen of a famous native scholar, and is therefore of infinitely more value than any hearsay evidence of a foreigner. I accordingly give the translation of it here :—

It is customary in Shantung, when any one is sick, for the women folk to engage an old sorceress or medium, who strums on a

\* See p. 318.

tambourine, and performs various mysterious antics. This custom obtains even more in the capital, where young ladies of the best families frequently organise such *séances* among themselves. On a table in the hall they spread out a profusion of wine and meat, and burn huge candles, which make the place as light as day. Then the sorceress, shortening her skirts, stands on one leg and performs the *shan-yang*,\* while two of the others support her, one on each side. All this time she is chattering unintelligible sentences, something between a song and a prayer, the words being confused, but uttered in a sort of tune, the hall resounding all the time with the thunder of drums enough to stun a person, with which her vaticinations are mixed up and lost. By-and-by her head begins to droop and her eyes to look aslant; and but for her two supporters she would inevitably fall to the ground. Suddenly she stretches forth her neck and bounds several feet into the air, upon which the other women regard her with terror, crying out, "The spirits have come to eat!" and immediately afterwards the candles are extinguished and everything is in total darkness. Thus they remain for about a quarter-of-an-hour, afraid to speak a word, which in any case would not be heard through the din, until at length the medium calls out the personal name of the head of the family† and some others; whereupon they relight the candles, and hurry up to ask if the reply of the spirits is favourable or otherwise. They then see that every scrap of the food and every drop of wine have disappeared. Meanwhile they watch the old woman's expression, whereby they can tell if the spirits are well disposed, and each one asks some question, to which the medium as promptly replies. Should there be any unbelievers among the party, the spirits are at once aware of their presence; and the old woman, pointing her finger at such a one, cries out,

\* *Shan-yang* is the name of a fabulous bird which made its appearance during the life of Confucius, and which was declared by him to presage rain. Since that time it has been customary for boys in certain parts of China, on the occasion of severe droughts, to hop about on one leg in imitation of this bird, hoping thereby to secure a fall of rain.

† Thus proving the presence of an ancestral spirit, since no one is at liberty to utter the personal name of another, except the speaker be a near relative of a higher generation. The personal name, therefore, of the head of the family could only be spoken by the dead.

“Disrespectful mocker! where are your trowsers?” upon which the mocker alluded to looks down, and, lo! her trowsers are gone—gone to the top of a tree in the courtyard, where they will subsequently be found.

Manchu women, and girls especially, are firm believers in spiritualism. On the slightest provocation they consult their medium, who comes into the room gorgeously dressed, and riding upon an imitation horse or tiger. In her hand she holds a spear, with which she mounts the couch and postures in an extraordinary manner; the animal she rides snorting or roaring fiercely all the time. Some call her Kuan Ti, others Chang Fei, and others again Chow Kung,\* from her terrible martial aspect, which strikes fear into all beholders. And should any daring fellow try to peep in during the *séance*, out of the window darts the spear, transfixes his hat, and draws it off his head into the room, while women and girls, young and old, hop round one after the other, like geese on one leg, without seeming to get the least tired.

I have made many efforts to be present at a spiritualistic *séance* in China, but my endeavours have not yet proved successful, albeit I am well known to the Chinese with whom I have come in contact as the very reverse of a ‘disrespectful mocker’ of their manifold customs and beliefs. It would appear however, that such proceedings as those above described are confined almost, if not entirely, to women, to whose mysterious rites no native of the other sex, still less an ‘outer barbarian,’ could ever under any possible pretext hope to gain admittance. Of Mesmerism, Planchette, and Spiritualism in China, I have therefore had personal experience only of the second; though from the care I have taken in prosecuting inquiries upon the other two, I am satisfied that what I have set down in this paper is not very wide of the truth.

\* Three martial heroes of Chinese history.

WEI-CH'I, OR THE CHINESE GAME  
OF WAR.\*

Two Chinese gentlemen, with at least one pair of huge spectacles between them, leaning over a delicately-lacquered board on which they are arranging certain black and white pips made from the beautiful marble of Yunnan, two pipes, two cups of the fragrant tea known only to China—and the reader has before him the not uncommon tableau of a game of Wei-ch'i.† It will be noted that the players have a something in facial expression, something in general bearing, enough to distinguish them from the attendants who from time to time refill the empty pipe, replenish the half-drained cup, or hand the grotesquely-painted spittoon, did not the short sight and sunken chest of the student, added to the fact of their indulging in the abtrusest of all games 'under heaven,'‡ at once proclaim their companionship of the mighty order of the *litterati*. For none but the educated play at Wei-ch'i. A knowledge of this difficult game stamps a man in China as

\* Reprinted from *Temple Bar*, by permission of the Editor.

† Pronounced *Way-ch'ee*. *Wei* means to surround, and *ch'i* is the specific name of games played on boards divided into squares.

‡ An ordinary term for China, still in use, though the Chinese are now more alive to its absurdity than they were a few years ago.

somewhat more than an ordinary person. Its subtleties are beyond the reach of the lazy; its triumphs too refined for the man of gross material tastes. Skill in Wei-ch'í implies the astuteness and versatility so prized amongst the Chinese. They could hardly believe a man to play Wei-ch'í well and yet be possessed of indifferent abilities as a practical man of the world. It would amount to a contradiction of terms. All the more so, as nearly all of those who enter upon a literary career make a point of attempting to learn the game. But many faint by the way. To a beginner, a mere knowledge of the rules for a long time seems hopeless; and subsequent application of them more hopeless still. The persevering ones alone play on day by day, until at last—suddenly as it were—the great scheme of Wei-ch'í dawns upon them in all its fulness and beauty; and from that day they are ardent enthusiasts in support of its unquestionable merits.

Wei-ch'í is solemnly declared by Chinese writers to have been invented by the great Emperor Yao,\* who flourished two thousand three hundred years before the birth of Christ. The cautious student of Western chronology, whose highest flights are confined to the paltry limits of centuries, may well stand aghast at the free and easy way in which Chinese history deals with thousands, albeit India has long since taught us that there are other claims to antiquity besides those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. On this subject we shall

\* See quotation from the *Po wu chih* in K'ang Hsi's dictionary: 'Yao invented Wei-ch'í, and Tan Chu was the best player.'

refer the reader to the late Mr. John Williams' valuable work on Chinese Comets, in the introduction of which it appears that certain astronomical phenomena recorded by the Chinese, even at an earlier date than that of the Emperor Yao, have since been tested and found correct. Truth and falsehood apart, it was a fitting tribute of respect to dedicate this noble game to the memory of that virtuous prince. With the convulsions of four thousand years many great names have sunk into oblivion; but the fame of Yao is as fresh to-day in the hearts of the Chinese people as it was in those days of yore when, after a glorious reign extending over two generations of man, he passed over his dissolute heir\* and abdicated the throne in favour of a private individual† whose title to Imperial advancement rested upon integrity alone.

The earliest mention of Wei-ch'i occurs only three hundred years before the Christian era; but it was then evidently a game of long standing, and the champion player of the day was not deemed unworthy to illustrate the teaching of China's most original thinker—the divine Mencius. We give a translation of the passage:—

Now take the art of Wei'chi.‡ It may be a small art, but unless a man gives his whole mind to it with energy, he will not

\* The 'Tan Chu' referred to in the last note.

† Named Shun, and taken, like Coriolanus, from the plough-tail. See p. 2.

‡ The single word in the text which stands for Wei-ch'i has been inaccurately translated by Dr. Legge as *chess*. That the two words are not interchangeable terms will be amply evident to the reader before he gets to the end of this essay.

succeed. Wei-ch'i Ch'iu is the best player in all the kingdom. Let him teach two men to play, one of whom gives his whole mind to it with energy, listening only to Wei-ch'i Ch'iu; the other of whom, although listening, has his whole mind fixed upon a wild swan which is approaching, and longs to bend his bow, adjust an arrow, and have a shot at it. Although he is learning along with the other, he will not keep up with him.\*

According to a sentence in the *Lun Yü*, or Confucian Gospels, the game of Wei-ch'i would come under a sweeping clause which condemns emulation of all sorts and kinds: 'The perfect man has no contentions;' the latter word being understood in the sense of 'rivalries.' The virtue of Confucius was cast in too stern a mould to allow of anything so frivolous as play, even of so high an order as Wei-ch'i. Besides, the necessary spirit of emulation was stigmatised by him as bad in itself. Man should excel for the sake of excelling, and not for the sake of being superior to his neighbour. The practice of virtue as an end, and not as a means, is a leading feature in the teachings of Confucius.

In the later literature of China Wei-ch'i has received no small share of attention. Several voluminous works † have been entirely devoted to elucidating its principles and many shorter treatises on the subject have appeared in collections of miscellaneous writings. Most of these are adorned with cuts showing advantageous positions and giving problems to be worked out by the student.

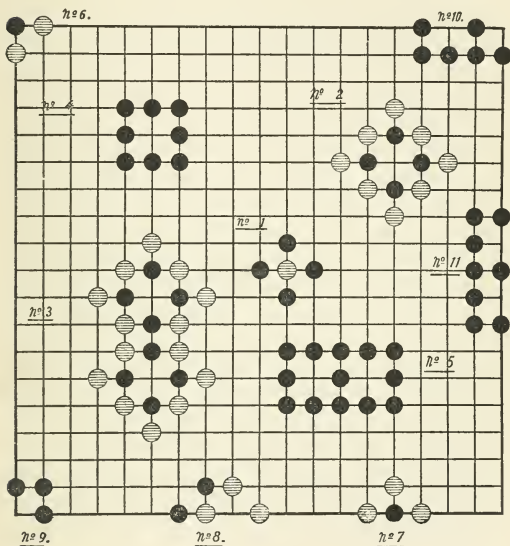
\* Mencius alludes once more to this game. He says that one of the five unfilial acts is 'to play Wei-ch'i for money;' *sc.* to gamble.

† We may mention the *T'ao hua ch'üan* in eight volumes, and the *Hsien chi wu k'u*.

As is not uncommonly the case on matters Chinese, the profoundest possible ignorance prevails amongst Europeans resident in China with regard to this wonderful game. We shall venture to begin with our own. Up to the end of 1874 we had frequently alluded to it in conversation with educated Chinese, and had always found them loud in its praises. At the same time it was freely declared to be far too difficult for foreigners to learn. Nor was any insult thereby intended to the members of that mighty Western fraternity which had produced steamers, sewing-machines, and the telegraph. If anything, it was meant that the sole means of communication being the Chinese language, too great difficulty would be experienced by the *teacher* in making the intricacies of the game sufficiently clear to the learner. For, inasmuch as only educated men know Wei-ch'í, and no educated man can speak a word of English, the alternative would be a Pidgin-English-speaking servant, and then it would be necessary first to make him understand the principles he was undertaking to explain. Supposing, however, even that to be accomplished, and a knowledge of the hidden mysteries of Wei-ch'í to be actually infused into the dull brain of one innocent of all acquaintanceship with the thirteen classics. Then we can well imagine him entering upon his functions as interpreter in some such glittering phraseology as this: "Wei-ch'í belong allo same two piecee man makee fightum; wantchee stealum he compound." Altogether, we had long accepted the dictum that no foreigner could learn Wei-ch'í without an infinite



deal of labour, and must have unconsciously adopted the opinion that it probably was not worth the effort. In 1875 we casually alluded to Wei-ch'i in a volume of miscellaneous sketches of Chinese life and character as 'a



game played with 360 black and white pips on a board containing 361 squares;’ also as being ‘very difficult and known only to the few.’ The ‘361 squares’ is an error, as will shortly be explained, which strangely

enough occurs in almost the same words in Dr. Williams new Chinese-English dictionary—the outcome of forty years' residence in China. It was owing to a remark by 'Cæcilius,' who noticed the above-mentioned 'Sketches' in the *Daily Press and St. James' Chronicle* of the 11th of December, 1875, that we subsequently determined to learn the game; a threat which we put in execution on our return to China in the spring, and the results of which we shall now endeavour to put before the reader as briefly and as clearly as possible.

Wei-ch'i is played on a board with a number of black and white pips. The board is a square containing 324 squares, or  $18 \times 18$ . About 300 pips will suffice—150 black and 150 white. They should bear the same proportion to the size of a Wei-ch'i board as draughts to the size of a draught-board. It is etiquette to offer white to the adversary, but the receiver of points plays with black as a matter of course. Wei-ch'i is not played on the squares as chess or draughts. It is played on the points where the lines forming the squares *cut or touch* one another. Now a board of 18 squares by 18 is made by 19 lines cutting or touching 19 lines at right angles; and if every point where these lines either *cut or touch* be carefully counted, the result will give 361 places,\* or 19 by 19. These 361 places connect with each other

\* The learner will do well to make sure that there actually are 361 *crosses*. It will familiarise him with the habitual use of this term in the explanations to follow, and teach him that the *places* on the boundary lines and at the four corners are just as much crosses as any of the others.

*along the lines*, not diagonally across the squares. In the absence of a better term let us call them *crosses*.

The object aimed at in Wei-ch'ī is to acquire, by a process of surrounding, as many of these 361 crosses as possible; but before proceeding any further with description, a few simple examples may be worked out on the board which will tend very much to clear the way for future explanations.

(1). For instance, place a white pip on any cross near the middle of the board, and surround it with four black pips placed on the nearest or *connecting* crosses. White having no move left may be taken up, and the space inclosed becomes the property of black.

(2). Black's four pips remaining *in statu quo*, surround them with eight white pips placed on the eight crosses *immediately connecting* (with black's four pips). As, however, there is still a vacant cross—*i.e.*, a move, in the middle—black is 'alive,' and cannot be taken up by white. But at white's next move he may put down a pip in that middle space, and take up black, who is now hemmed in on all sides and has no move left. The space thus inclosed becomes the property of white. Nor could black fill up that middle space with one of his own pips, as he would be himself cutting off his only claim to existence, and be at once taken up by white. It is plain, therefore, that such a space inclosed by only four pips is not safe from an irruption of the enemy.

(3). Let us go back a step. Black has four pips down surrounding a vacant cross. Place an exactly

similar square of four more black pips in direct connection with these, but connected by only a single line, and then surround the whole lot with fourteen white pips. In this instance, there being *two* vacant moves in the middle of black's garrison, white is no longer able to put down a pip and take up black's eight, because black may claim that he has still one available move left. But a close inspection will show that if white does put a pip down in one of these—'eyes' the Chinese call them, and it is as well to keep to the Chinese terms—he will, at any rate, have cut off three of black's pips from all communication with the other eye or with anything else, and these he may at once take up, the space so inclosed becoming his. Further, as by this move he has reduced black's remaining five pips to exactly the same condition as black's four pips in Example 2—*i.e.*, surrounded from the outside with only a single move in the middle—all white has to do is to wait his turn and fill up this solitary eye, by which means black's five pips may be at once taken up. It is clear, therefore, that such an inclosure as black's, even though containing two eyes, is not an impregnable garrison, though it takes longer to reduce than a garrison with only one eye.

(4). Again, surround a single cross with four pips, and add to these four more, making *a square* of eight pips. Such an eye as this differs essentially from an eye composed of only four pips, inasmuch as no single one of its component pips is open to be surrounded and cut off by the enemy, though of course the whole

garrison could be surrounded and subsequently taken up by a hostile pip being placed in the middle, as in Example 2. This is what is called a *true* eye. It should be noticed that even if two of the corner pips of this square of eight be taken away, the remaining six form a semi-true eye. No single one of its pips can be surrounded, but the whole body may easily be cut in half, as will be easily seen on the board. Neither are two of these six-pip eyes, placed in no matter what connection, perfectly secure from the enemy. A part of one or the other will always be open to attack, and when one eye is broken into, the remaining eye cannot stand alone, as in Example 3.

(5). But arrange a perfectly true eye of eight pips in the form of a square (Example 4); and make this square into an oblong by the addition of five more pips at either one of its four sides. The oblong thus composed of thirteen pips (twelve outside and one in the middle) contains *two true eyes*. The enemy may surround it on every side, and cut off all communication with the main body; but the little garrison stands secure from every form of assault. *It contains two true eyes*. For supposing the adversary does surround it—what then? To take it up both eyes must be filled, and that is of course impossible, as a pip may only be put down in an enemy's eye when either or all the surrounding pips can be immediately taken up.

A *resumé* of the above examples gives us the following results:—

Four pips surrounding a single cross are open to attack

(Example 2), because they contain only one eye, and that one a *false* eye.

Eight pips surrounding two crosses are open to attack (Example 3), because, though they inclose two eyes, each one is a false eye.\*

Eight pips in the form of a square, inclosing a single cross, are open to attack (Example 4); for, though containing a true eye, they contain but a single eye.

Any space containing two true eyes (Example 5) is utterly impregnable.

Of course the examples given above could not happen in so many words in practice where the players put down pips alternately. I have been speaking as if one of the opponents lay dormant and let the other surround him at his pleasure. It now only remains to speak of the four extreme or boundary lines of the Wei-ch'i board, which are played upon in the same way as the other lines and have exactly the same number (nineteen) of crosses, the four corners of the board being necessarily included to make up the grand total of 361 places. We will attempt explanation with the aid of a few simple examples as before.

(6.) A black pip at either of the four corner crosses may be killed by placing one white pip on each side of it. As will be readily seen, it has no move left.

(7.) Supposing a solitary black pip to occupy a cross, other than one of the four corners, on either of the four

\* Even were one of them a true eye the garrison would be no safer, as the enemy would begin by reducing the false eye, and then (Example 4) make short work of the other.

extreme or boundary lines. Three pips are sufficient to hem it in; it is taken up and that space becomes of course the property of white.

(8.) But three pips at the side of the board do not make a true eye any more than four pips in the middle of the board. Either one of these three may be attacked and cut off from the rest. For instance, suppose black has a pip down on the first line close alongside either, not in the middle of white's two pips on the first (*i.e.*, boundary) line, and another on the same side of white's triangle on the second line, in close connection with white's pip on the second line; then that one of white's pips which is in connection with black's two pips is in danger. For all black has to do, if it is his move, is to put a pip down in the middle of white's triangle and take up the surrounded pip. Suppose black does this, it is clear that white is now in exactly the same relative position to black as black to white before the last move—*i.e.*, having two pips close up to black's newly-formed triangle, endangering the safety of black's nearest pip on the first line. It naturally suggests itself to white to retort by putting a pip down on the very cross just lost and take up the pip just played by black. But it is evident that there would be no end to such a system of retort; and therefore the rules of the game make it compulsory that a player who has just lost a single pip *in no matter what part of the board* shall allow one move to intervene before retorting on the pip which caused his loss. This being the case, it becomes white's business to look round the board for some weak point in his own, or, better

still, for some vulnerable point in his adversary's game, and play a pip accordingly. Then, if he succeeds in creating such a diversion that black is compelled to hurry off to the rescue, next move he will be able to take up black's pip and regain his lost ground, when of course the same process repeats itself with regard to black. But if white fails in making an important move, and drawing off black's attention, then black puts down a pip in the middle of his own triangle and renders further contest in that particular way impossible.\* Of course if black's four pips thus arranged are not in connection with a *live* garrison, they are in danger of being bodily surrounded from the outside, and the absence of two true eyes hands them over an easy prey to white.

(9.) A true eye may be made at the corner of the board by placing a pip on each side of the extreme corner cross, and a third in direct connection with these two. The result is a tiny square hemming in the corner cross.

(10.) To make two true eyes at a corner, preserve the tiny square mentioned in the last example, and by adding three pips transform it into an oblong,† containing exactly three times the area of the original square, and two vacant crosses which are the eyes. It is an impregnable garrison.

(11.) A single true eye on the first line, not at a corner,

\* This is called 'stealing,' and in skilful hands may often be made to turn the tide of an apparently hopeless game.

† The 'squares' and 'oblongs' here mentioned are not necessarily made of four sides of pips inclosing a space. At the side of the board only three sides of pips would be wanted, the boundary line taking the place of the fourth.



will require not less than five pips; two true eyes not less than eight. The first is made by arranging three pips round a cross on the first line, as in Example 8, and making a rectangle by adding two pips, one on each side of the single pip on the second line. The second, by adding three pips to the above five in such a manner as to double the length of the oblong contained by those five.

It should now be possible for the reader to begin a game. The first move is an important point to secure, as it gives the *lead*, upon the possession of which much depends throughout the game. It belongs by right to the giver of points; otherwise it may be decided by toss. And here we must put in the remark that beginners should not attempt to use a full-sized board. A smaller one shows the principles of the game quite as well, and is not nearly so bewildering. Take a board of 121 crosses only,\* or eleven lines cutting or touching eleven lines at right angles. This is called a "corner board." Now supposing white to give four points on a board of these dimensions. Black places four pips down, each one at a distance of four crosses (all inclusive) from *two* sides of the board; in other words, each at one of the extreme corner crosses of an interior square of 5 lines by 5—*i.e.*, 4 squares by 4 = 16. On a larger board, the four pips are also put down each at a distance of four places (all inclusive) from two sides of the board; but the interior square thus formed varies with the area of the whole. If two points only are

\* Always an odd number.

given, any two opposite corners of this square of four pips are the places. If eight pips are given, the same square of four is arranged, and four more are put down, one in the middle of each of its four sides, and so on. But if the players are equal, the winner of the toss begins by putting down a pip wherever fancy may lead him; somewhere midway between the middle and sides of the board is the best place. The adversary then follows, generally on a cross somewhere close at hand, nearer the side or middle of the board, according as he sees a chance of hemming down the enemy to the side, or finally circling round him in the middle. And thus they play alternately until one has succeeded in surrounding all but a single move a pip or body of such belonging to his opponent; in the latter case of course without two true eyes (Example 4). He then cries *check*—in Chinese, 'I'll eat you'—to that pip or body of pips, and his opponent must strive to join on either to another pip or body of pips which work freely—*i.e.*, are not surrounded, or, if they are, contain two true eyes. In this way the threatened outpost is placed in a state of perfect security.\* It is here important to note that an isolated pip checked on any cross of any second line cannot possibly be saved, if only the adversary play properly. To attempt to do so is only waste of time.

\* Any cross surrounded on three sides by the enemy is called a 'tiger's mouth.' A pip put down on such a cross is thrown away, for the opponent immediately puts another on the fourth side and takes it up. A 'tiger's mouth' should be broken up by surrounding one of its component pips, or by leading a column right into the dangerous inclosure.

The variety of combinations even on a small Wei-ch'ī board is enormous, and that variety has the advantage of beginning from the very first move. It is often remarked in China, that the uncertainties of life and death are well exemplified in a game of Wei-ch'ī. For instance, black may check one or more of white's pips, and, white failing to save them, black is of course in a position to take them up when it comes to his move. Seeing, however, that they are irrevocably his, he may direct his attention to some other part of the board; and by-and-by white, gradually working up his forces in that direction, may by some means or other break through the lines that inclose these pips, and, by joining them on to some garrison or to his main body, restore to them the *life* they had apparently lost beyond all recovery. Even supposing black to have fenced off a space by a connecting line of pips from one boundary line of the board to another, a space in the middle of the board, in either of the corners, or anywhere else, it by no means follows that such space is irrevocably black's. For white, having hemmed in the garrison from the outside, may dash into the middle; and then, if he can fill up before black has time to make his two eyes, black's pips being hemmed in on all sides without a move left, fall an easy prey to white. Even if black does succeed in making his two eyes, white may still (if there is room, and if he has a fair start) manage to inclose a small space inside black's with two true eyes in it, which becomes his, and counts for him at the end of the game.

Now, let black have inclosed by connecting pips a small space anywhere on the board, at either corner or in the middle, and himself to be closely surrounded from the outside by white. Unless he can at once secure two true eyes, it is by no means sure that the garrison will remain his. For, as in the last paragraph, supposing white to fill up this space with pips, then black is dead. Even if black waits until white has filled up all but one and then puts down a pip himself and takes up white, white may begin again directly and fill up until he is taken up once more. But if this is repeated a certain number of times (according to the size of the space), at last black will have himself filled up every move but one, and then white puts a pip down there and all black's are gone. Such spaces afford many neat problems to the beginner. I will attempt to put one of the simplest into words.

Black has two true eyes at the edge of the board (see latter half of Example 11), all except the middle of the three pips on the boundary line. He is surrounded on the outside by white. Now if it is his turn to play, he naturally puts his pip down at once and secures the two true eyes shown in the example. But if it is white's turn to play and *he* makes this move, then black's pips are practically dead. For supposing him to put down a pip each side of white and take up his single pip, then only a single cross remains, and white of course occupies it next move and takes up black. If he lets white put down a second pip and then takes him up, it is but putting off the fatal moment. Next

move white occupies one of the two remaining squares, and then if he is again taken up, we have the old position of a single vacant cross. In such a case, if black fails to secure the middle cross at first, he directs his energies elsewhere and does not contend for a space which can never be his. Black's only chance would be to call off white's attention and endeavour meanwhile to break through his exterior line of pips. By varying the number of crosses thus inclosed, many pretty combinations of this kind may be produced. Trained players see at a glance in whose possession such spaces will ultimately remain, and accordingly do not play them out; but the tyro should take no conclusions for granted until he has proved them satisfactorily by experience. Sometimes it will happen that one player will get a few pips down in a piece of his adversary's ground (already surrounded on the outside) in such a position that, although two crosses remain vacant, neither can be the first to fill up one of these, because the opponent by filling up the other would at once take up, and by the series of combinations to follow would gain final possession of the contested space. Thus some half-dozen pips will often be able to remain unharmed in the midst of a hostile garrison, though wanting the two true eyes, without which under ordinary circumstances no body of pips can successfully resist attack. Such pips are called *truce* pips, and count at the end of the game. The position is not an easy one to explain, but once met with in practice cannot fail to be understood.

And now supposing the board to be so covered with pips that neither party can play another move without putting down in the adversary's ground, where they are sure to be immediately taken up, or in his own ground, where, if already safe from hostile inroads, they are of course perfectly useless,—then the game of Wei-ch'i is at an end, and it only remains to see who is the winner. This is effected by counting the crosses *occupied and inclosed* by the pips of either player. Good players inclose large tracts, which it is not obligatory to cover with pips. Only if the adversary dashes in with a view to make a smaller garrison inside, it then becomes necessary to follow him about closely so that he cannot make his two true eyes, at the same time securing two or more such eyes for oneself. Such pips may be removed from the interior of a garrison before counting up begins. The pips are nothing in themselves; they merely mark the crosses covered or inclosed. Of these crosses, a 'corner' Wei-ch'i board, such as has been recommended for learners, contains  $11 \times 11 = 121$ —always an odd number. Now black may have possessed himself of sixty of these, and white of sixty-one. Then, if there is nothing else to take into consideration, white wins by one cross. But if he was the receiver of points, then these must be deducted from his total and added on to black's, who will become the winner by so many as his total exceeds sixty or one-half the board, the idea being that each player starts with one-half the board as capital which he may increase or lose, a drawn game being impossible, as there is always one cross left to

fight for, over and above the halves just mentioned. Thus, if black has one hundred crosses, and white twenty-one only, black wins by forty—*i.e.*, thirty-nine over his capital of sixty, plus the one contended for. White loses by forty, for it would take thirty-nine to make up white's original capital and one extra to make him the winner. It should be noticed here that it is only necessary to count the crosses of one player to see who has won the game, and by how many. But even now the game is not quite decided.

Suppose black to have sixty-one, and white sixty places, no points having been given by either side. It still remains to count the garrisons or spaces inclosed. If the players have (as they should aim at having) one large garrison each, no matter how parts of it ramify among the enemy's pips so long as all the outposts are connected with the main body, and consequently with each other, then black wins the game by the single cross he holds to the good. But if, instead of one, black has three separate garrisons, for each garrison that he has more than white he forfeits one cross. In the present instance, therefore, two points would be taken from black and added on to white, making the latter the winner by that number. This is all on the subject of counting, which is as simple as it well can be.

And now we fancy we hear some weary experimentalist who has carefully followed this somewhat trying description, expecting every instant that the light of Wei-ch'i would flash across his understanding, exclaim against the tedium of acquiring this difficult game. If

such be the case, if all we have written still fails to rouse the necessary energy for learning its rules, and kindle the necessary enthusiasm for appreciating its combinations, we only ask it to be conceded that the fault may lie in our own sickly disquisition, or possibly in the learner himself; not in the fundamental principles of a game which has survived the crash of dynasties, the havoc of rebellion and war. Is it rational to believe that an ingenious people like the Chinese, delighting as they do in intellectual subtleties, would have given their homage for so many centuries to a game not worth the candle? Many of China's greatest heroes have been famous for their skill at Wei-ch'i. Su Tung-p'o\* forgot the shame and misery of exile in the excitement of a hard-fought game. The great general, Mêng Ch'ang-chün, in his hours of peaceful retirement when the din of battle was hushed, played daily bouts of Wei-ch'i to keep his hand in practice for the art of war. So unusual is it in China for a man of high literary tastes and abilities to be ignorant of Wei-ch'i that history has deigned to record that fact of the talented emperor who reigned under the style of Ch'ien Lung.† It chanced, one day, that a Japanese envoy—in those days 'Tribute-bearer'—petitioned his Imperial Majesty for the honour of a game. Ashamed to say that he could not play, the Emperor caused a board and pips to be brought and gravely sat down as if he knew all about it. Royalty of course took the first move, but his Majesty, not

\* See p. 82.

† See p. 116.



knowing where to begin, thought the middle of the board would be as good a place as any, and accordingly put his pip down on the very centre cross of all, to the no small astonishment of his opponent. The Japanese then made such a move as he deemed advantageous, which the Emperor immediately imitated by putting down a pip in an exactly relative position on the opposite side of the middle pip, and this he continued to do all through the game, at the end of which he was necessarily the winner by the pip he put down first.

Had the Chinese nothing to take the place of Wei-ch'i, we might be forced to concede—even then under protest—that they only play Wei-ch'i for want of a better game. But they have games involving thought with cards, they have dominoes, and many other games played with and without pips, requiring either calculation or memory. Lastly they have that beautiful game\* which has so long reigned supreme in India, Persia, and the West—the 'Game and Playe of y<sup>e</sup> Chesse.' To compare Wei-ch'i with either Chinese or Western chess is quite beside the question. They have nothing in common but the element of calculation and an absence of anything like chance. Chess has a decided advantage in the variety of character attaching to the different pieces. In variety of combinations, besides that of number, Wei-ch'i has this advantage, that such variety begins from the very first move. That drawn games may

\* Differing in detail from our game, and, in our opinion, decidedly inferior.

occur in chess, but not in Wei-ch'i, might be quoted as an advantage by the supporters of either side. Without being a scientific player of one game or the other, we have no hesitation in saying that, national pride, prejudice, and the force of early association apart, Wei-ch'i and chess meet upon equal terms.

In taking leave of Wei-ch'i, we must ask permission to add that we do so only so far as these pages are concerned. It has established itself securely with us as a household game, and will doubtless yet afford us many a pleasant hour. We can only hope we have succeeded in presenting its general features in a tolerably clear light to the uninitiated reader. To enable us even to attempt this, it was necessary to master the science of the game ourselves; and though we still remain but indifferent players, and frequently meet with the roughest treatment at the hands of Chinese experts, we do not regret one instant of the time spent in acquiring this truly noble game.

ON THE SURNAMES OF THE  
CHINESE.

“. . . . ONE of them said his name was Lo Fong Le, and I think the other's was Le Fong Lo . . . .” observed a lady who was recently describing a visit she had received from two members of the Chinese Embassy now in London. And her remark very fairly represents the general level of public information, not only in the matter of Chinese names, but on most topics connected with China and its swarming millions. The social institutions of that empire have always been regarded as irresistibly funny, exhibiting, as they not unfrequently do, a quaint antagonism to our own; and any attempt to place them in a somewhat truer light, with the bloom of fiction rubbed off, is pretty sure to meet with a cool reception. Regardless of fact, people seem to prefer to believe that the Chinese dine daily on bird's-nest soup and rats, are a nation of thieves, opium-smokers, polygamists, and even worse than that. These and similar notions have long formed part of our ethnological creed; and many years, and probably many writers, will pass away before the necessary modifications have been made and universally accepted. Only the other day, I

read in a newspaper that a Chinaman was gravely sworn before a magistrate at one of the London Police Courts according to Chinese custom. A saucer was procured and smashed in pieces, the witness expressing his readiness, if he should not tell the truth, to perish in like manner. Now, in the first place, the Chinese do not swear their witnesses as we do, but make them sign or mark written depositions, the closing words of which are a set formula, viz: 'The above evidence is the truth.' Occasionally, during examination, the magistrate will warn a witness that Heaven is overhead and Earth below his feet, implying that divine vengeance will infallibly overtake a liar; but beyond this there is nothing in the way of an oath known or practised in a Chinese court of law. At an 'ordeal,' a peculiar kind of which is still common all over China, the person put to the test is called upon to repeat a most terrible form of oath, and this is sealed, as it were, with the blood of a cock killed at the moment, the speaker professing his willingness to die like that bird should he be found to deviate by ever so little from the truth. Saucer-breaking belongs in all probability to one of the numerous secret societies which have sprung up at various periods of Chinese history; it is certainly not a widely recognised ceremony, even if it is practised at all.

Meanwhile, it is my present object to give a brief survey of personal nomenclature in China as it exists at the present day, and as it has existed for more than two thousand years past, centuries before any such system was adopted in the British Isles, where surnames are a

comparatively late invention. The theme is in one sense new ; since it has never, to my knowledge, been treated by any previous writer.

To ask a Chinaman how many surnames there are in China, would be to insure one or other of two answers. An uneducated man would infallibly reply 'a hundred ;' a scholar would say he didn't know. The explanation of this apparent paradox is simple enough. At every bookstall in China may be purchased for about a farthing a little work entitled *Hundred-Family-Surnames*. It does not, however, contain one hundred, but four hundred and eight single or monosyllabic names, and thirty double or dissyllabic names, making a total of four hundred and thirty-eight in all. The fact is that the character for 'hundred' is in this combination vaguely expressive of a large number, the whole series or class in question being always understood to be included. Similarly, the cognate phrases 'hundred officials' and 'hundred trades' do not by any means limit the numbers of those two classes of Chinese society, but merely signify the various officials and the various trades in the empire of China, collectively. Still, it is the use of this term that has beguiled the illiterate native, and more than one unwary European, into the belief that the surnames of the Chinese are one hundred in all, neither more nor less ; while the educated man, who has learnt to repeat the collection by heart, and is moreover well aware of names not included therein, makes the guarded answer quoted above.

Better editions of what I shall henceforth call *The*

*Family Names*, are published for those who can afford to buy them; and the preface of one of these I have thought worthy of translation, the more so as, unlike the usual run of Chinese prefaces, it is short and to the point:—

“This collection of family names is taken from the *T'u yüan chi*,\* and was the work of an old scholar of Hang-chow, at the beginning of the Sung† dynasty. It was the epoch when Ch'ien Chiao was governor of Chekiang; hence Chao‡ is the first name on the list, and Ch'ien§ is the second. The third, Sun, was the name of Ch'ien Ch'iao's favourite; and the fourth, Li, was that of the ruler of Nanking. Then follow the great clan-names of the empire, arranged in rhyme, but with so many omissions as to provoke severe criticism from the learned. Nevertheless, this book has been ever since in general circulation; schoolboys learn to repeat it and receive it as a canonical work. I have therefore dealt with the collection as it stood, adding a rough commentary by way of likening it to *Surnames, Ancient and Modern*, and to previous productions of the same character; though in point of fact my volume, as compared with those, is but the puny weapon of 'puff and dart' among the artillery of war.

“Done by WANG HSIANG OF LANG-YEH.”

\* Unknown to me. Probably some kind of 'miscellany.'

† A.D. 960–1280. See p. 79.

‡ The surname of the founder of the house of Sung.

§ Ch'ien Chiao's capital city was Hang-chow, where the 'old scholar' dwelt who made this compilation.

From the above document we learn that this limitation of surnames to a fixed number is (1) admittedly of modern origin, and (2) inaccurate in detail. The incompleteness of the list of 408 + 30 would be readily ascertained by consulting the great lexicon published some two centuries ago under the auspices of the Emperor K'ang Hsi. There we find no less than 1,678 characters mentioned as family names, besides 168 double and 8 triple names, making a grand total of 1854, inclusive of those in the collection under review. Of these, the great majority are quite unknown as such to the Chinese public, it being a fact that almost all the surnames now current in China are to be found in the small volume which, as Wang Hsiang rightly says, 'schoolboys learn to repeat and receive as a canonical work.' I shall therefore confine myself chiefly to an examination of *The Family Names*, always, it must be duly borne in mind, with reference to the Chinese, as opposed to the Manchu or Tartar, inhabitants of China. English readers are apt to think of the people of the Middle Kingdom as a corporate whole, forgetting that only 250 years back the Chinese Empire was conquered by the Tartars of Manchuria, and unaware perhaps that the victors and the vanquished, though at present mingling in perfect social and political harmony, have each steadily preserved particular characteristics of their own, among which personal nomenclature holds rather a prominent position.\* The Manchus imposed, indeed, their peculiar coiffure, the tail, upon the Chinese as a badge of submission to the new dynasty; but otherwise

\* See pp. 111, 112.

they have always forborne to meddle with such harmless institutions as they found already in vogue. Their ordinary dress is similar to that of the Chinese, though differences are visible to the practised eye; and while they do not subject their own women to the barbarous process of early foot-binding, they do not prevent the Chinese from continuing this ignoble custom—a custom which, in my opinion, is the greatest blot on their national escutcheon.

The Chinese character, pronounced *hsing* in the Court dialect of to-day, which answers to our word ‘surname,’ is a composite symbol. It is made up of two parts, one of which signifies, and is further said to have once been, the picture of a ‘woman,’ and the other ‘to give birth to’ or ‘to be born.’ Consequently, the whole character *hsing* was explained by the most famous of Chinese etymologists,\* who flourished in the first century of our era, to be ‘that with which a man is born.’† Indeed, we are unable to go back to any date short of the legendary period of Chinese history when a man could be born without entering at once into part proprietorship of an inheritance of the kind; though in the earlier ages surnames seem to have been confined to clans rather than extended to individuals, just as in the present day the Manchus do not make use of their family or clan names, but employ their personal appellations instead.

\* Hsü Shên. See p. 38.

† The continuation of this entry is curious:—‘Of old, the holy mother above, influenced by Heaven (*sc.* God), bore a son, who was therefore named the Son of Heaven (*sc.* the Emperor).’



The view, however, taken by the native etymologist, is open to grave objection for reasons which cannot be enlarged upon here. It must suffice for me to state that the portion of the character *hsing* which signifies 'to give birth to,' etc., had never, in all probability, anything whatever to do with the meaning or etymological origin of the whole. There was doubtless a time when the Chinese had both a spoken word and a written symbol for 'to be born' or 'to give birth to,' but only a spoken word for 'surname;' then, when the necessity arose for writing down the latter, the already-existing symbol for the former was taken, because of the similarity in sound between the two, and to it was added the specially-appropriate symbol for 'woman,' as a means of differentiating, not merely these two, but the newly-formed character *hsing* from each of a series of characters combined on exactly the same principle. Thus, by keeping the same phonetic base and changing the differentiator *woman* to (1) bamboo, (2) bullock, (3) cowries, or (4) sun, we obtain four new characters, all similar in sound, but of such varying significations as (1) pan-pipes, (2) sacrificial animals, (3) wealth, and (4) stars. Whether or not, on the other hand, the early Chinese traced the family line through the mother, as might appear from the important part played by the element 'woman' in the characteristic *hsing*, I am quite unprepared to say; it is at any rate worthy of note that the 'eight most ancient surnames' are all written with this particular symbol. But in anything like antiquarian research, the literature of China is far from being a safe

guide. The most sober among Chinese authors are for ever giving play to fancy, and mixing up fiction and fact. For instance, Pan Ku,\* the stately historian and scholar of the Han dynasty, states it as his opinion that the surnames of China were originally limited to one hundred. Unfortunately, he proceeds to dissipate any value that might have been attached to his opinion by telling how this number was reached. 'Man,' says he, 'came into the world heir to the Five Virtues. The musical notes are five† — Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol; and five times five is twenty-five. Allow for the variations of the Four Seasons — four times twenty-five; hence the total of a hundred surnames.' In another passage the same writer informs us that 'surnames were invented to cement love and friendship, to knit more closely the family tie, to distinguish man from the brute creation, and to insure propriety in matrimonial alliances.'

From a careful analysis of *The Family Names* it becomes apparent that more than half of the collection have been derived from the names of places. I may remark, *en passant*, that I am not aware of any place in China which has taken its name from an individual; nothing like Faringdon or Gislingham, the homes of the Fearings and Gislings of old. These local surnames have either been adopted precisely as written; or (2) with the omission of a portion of the character, signifying

\* Flourished during the first century. See p. 38.

† In ancient times this was the recognised number, the Chinese names of which I have rendered by English equivalents merely for convenience.

'district;'\* or (3) in rarer instances with the addition of this same part, as if with a view to complete an otherwise imperfect symbol and exhibit its origin more clearly.

About half the remainder are names which have been adopted from the personal appellations of ancestors and of the mythological Emperors of 4,000 years ago, as well as from official titles and even from sobriquets of distinguished members of the family; the balance being made up of a heterogeneous mass which, for present purposes, may remain in a class by itself.

Now the beginnings of nomenclature in China are lost in the mists of antiquity; and while admitting that there may possibly be some foundation of truth in those genealogical statements which carry us back to semi-legendary periods, it will be safer to start from the commencement of a more truly historical era, namely, about, eleven centuries and a half before Christ. At that date there undoubtedly lived a great and warlike chieftain the famous Wên Wang, one of whose sons, Wu Wang, ultimately ascended the

\* The family name of H.E. the Marquis Tsêng is a case in point. It was originally the name of a territory, called Tsêng; to represent which in writing, a phonetic base of that particular value was taken, and to it was added the differentiator 'district' as a clue to the sense of the whole. A younger son of the Emperor Shao K'ang (B.C. 2079) was appointed to rule over this territory, and his descendants adopted Tsêng as their name; subsequently, when the State in question ceased to exist, leaving out the differentiator 'district,' and writing the character as at the present day. [The *ê* is here arbitrarily used, and has precisely the same sound as the *u* in *hung*. For English readers, therefore, it would be simpler to write the Marquis *Tsung*.]

throne as the first sovereign of the Chow dynasty.\* Wên Wang is reputed to have had no fewer than ninety-eight other sons, ninety-nine in all; and although this total is an exaggeration, founded partly upon the well-known Chinese tendency in that direction, and partly upon the fascination exercised by such a number as ninety-nine, it is none the less certain that a great many of Wu Wang's brothers were appointed to govern small States or territories under the feudal system which then prevailed. And it is equally certain that whereas some of the descendants of these petty princes adopted a part of the personal appellation of their particular ancestor, the founder of their house, a great many more took their names from the locality in which the family settled, altering the character or otherwise in one of the three ways above described. It is up to this point that the native genealogist feels himself on comparatively safe ground; and but little heed is paid to the enthusiast who traces the origin of his family back to the palmy days of Yao and Shun.

But before proceeding further, I will give a selection from *The Family Names*, choosing such as are easily rendered into English, and arranging them according to a rough classification of my own. I shall also add to each class, in italics, a few specimens of surnames mentioned as such in K'ang Hsi's lexicon, but excluded from the collection with which I am now principally concerned.

\* See p. 4.

I. *Nature* :—

Morning.	Cave.	Stone.
Clouds.	Field.	<i>Sun.</i>
Thunder.	Water.	<i>Moon.</i>
Shade.	Hillock.	<i>Stars.</i>
River.	Flood.	<i>Evening.</i>
Pool.	Valley.	<i>Sea.</i>
Mountain.	Sand.	

II. *Animals* :—

Bear.	Horse.	<i>Panther.</i>
Camel.	Ox.	<i>Tiger.</i>
Dragon.	Sheep.	<i>Fox.</i>

III. *Birds* :—

Pheasant.	Phoenix.	<i>Owl</i> (doubtful).
Swallow.	Bird's-nest.	

IV. *Fishes* :—

Fish (the species).	Dried Fish.	Crab.	<i>Turtle.</i>
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V. *Parts of the Body* :—

Hair.	<i>Ear.</i>	<i>Head.</i>
Long-ears.	<i>Eye.</i>	<i>Mouth.</i>
Squint-eye.	<i>Teeth.</i>	

VI. *Weapons* :—

Draw-bow.	Bow.	Spear.
Target.	Arms.	<i>Arrow.</i>
Bow-twang.	Shield.	<i>Wound.</i>

VII. *Times and Seasons* :—

Time.	<i>Spring.</i>	<i>Month</i> (same as <i>moon</i> ).
Summer.	<i>Winter.</i>	<i>Day</i> (same as <i>sun</i> ).
Autumn.	<i>Year.</i>	

VIII. *Family and Dwellings* :—

Home.	House.	Boy.	<i>Man.</i>
Dwell.	Palace.	Grandson.	<i>Woman.</i>
Gateway.	Hamlet.		

IX. *Eating and Drinking* :—

Feed.	Banquet.	Broth.	Gruel.	<i>Bellyful.</i>
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X. *Occupations* :—

Shepherd.	Farmer.	Butcher.	Wizard.
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XI. *Colours* :—

Red.	Yellow.	White.	<i>Colour of Nature.</i>
Blue.	Black.	<i>Purple.</i>	

XII. *Trees and Flowers* :—

Hawthorn.	Rice.	Larch.	<i>Peach.</i>
Thistle.	Mugwort.	Leaf.	<i>Bamboo.</i>
Rush.	Bramble.	Branch.	<i>Chestnut.</i>
Cassia.	Cedar.	Thorn.	<i>Wheat.</i>
Plum.	Reed.	Forest.	<i>Grain.</i>
Willow.	Mulberry.	Faggots.	
Hemp.	Pine.	<i>Bean.</i>	

XIII. *Minerals* :—

Gold.	<i>Iron.</i>	<i>Silver.</i>	<i>Pewter.</i>
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XIV. *Characteristics, Physical and Mental* :—

Sharp.	Square.	Lofty.	East.
Empty.	Level.	Sweet.	<i>West.</i>
Full.	High.	Bitter.	<i>South.</i>
Broad.	Bright.	Cautious.	<i>Fat.</i>
Thin.	Tepid.	Stern.	<i>Fragrant.</i>
Ancient.	Cold.	Modest.	<i>Strange.</i>
Rich.	Double.	Martial.	

XV. *Passions* :—

Hope.	Joy.	Love.	<i>Fear.</i>	<i>Hate.</i>
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XVI. *Number* \* :—

Ten-thousand.	<i>Four.</i>	<i>Five.</i>	<i>Nine.</i>	<i>Hundred.</i>
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\* A Manchu official, recently stationed at Amoy, rejoiced in the extraordinary name (see p. 112) of 'Eighty-four.'

XVII. *Official* :—

Registrar.	Duke.	Frontier.	Prison.
Minister.	Tribute.	Prince.	Seal.
Officer.	State.	Queen.	Salary.

XVIII. *Miscellaneous* :—

Money.	Harmony.	Music.	<i>Needle.</i>
Ball.	Peace.	Age.	<i>Bowels.</i>
Yeast.	Repose.	Pole.	<i>Fire.</i>
Bushel.	Pot.	Cord.	<i>Hook.</i>
Tally.	Button.	Nail.	<i>Square (the).</i>
Balance.	Cowries.	<i>Pillow.</i>	<i>Compasses.</i>

Such are the meanings of a large number of Chinese surnames, many of them being absolutely identical with those of English families. From these lists the reader will be able to draw his own conclusions, and I shall only take upon myself to make one statement in connection therewith, namely, that surnames derived from animals are considered objectionable in China, where the brute creation has always been held in low esteem. The 'totemism' of surnames is a subject which I believe has been run to death in reference to the West, but has yet to find an exponent of its application in the East.

The question now arises as to how these Chinese names, of which so far only English equivalents have been given, sound when pronounced in ordinary conversation. The answer is that while some consist of sounds foreign to our ears, and such as it would be quite impossible to express with the letters of our alphabet, others again are not only phonetically familiar but almost identical with certain English surnames. Thus, there are ten Chinese surnames which, if written

down exactly as pronounced, would appear as *Pye, Lowe, Shee, Mee, May, Lay, Nye, Mann, Tighe, and Lee*. As it is, we are constrained to use for the expression of Chinese sounds generally an arbitrary but at the same time a consistent orthography; and so it comes about that the above ten names would be properly written down in such a disguised form as *Pai, Lou, Hsi, Mi, Mei, Lei, Nai, Man, Tai, and Li*. On the other hand, I have myself been acquainted with two persons bearing thoroughly Chinese names, spelling and all, viz., *Ching* and *Ling*; besides a third, *Jung*, which I copied out of a newspaper. Of the English origin of the first two I know nothing; in Chinese, *Ching* might mean either *thorn* or *a fine view* (say *Bellevue*), and *Ling* an *ice-house*. Among the sounds which cannot be expressed in English, except by an arbitrary system, *ssü* and *tsü* will suffice as specimens; unless I may add the curious-looking name of the first Chinese gentleman admitted to practise at the English bar. This name would be transliterated into Cantonese, his native dialect, as 'Ng, and its sound may be easily reproduced by uttering some such word as *sing* without the *si*. It may here be mentioned that whereas Chinese is rich enough and to spare in written characters and their manifold literary combinations, it is one of the most meagre of languages in regard to spoken sounds. The Court dialect, spoken at Peking and in the neighbourhood, has a total of only 421, under one or another of which every word must fall; so that were it not for the partial remedy afforded by the subdivision of the majority of these 421 sounds



under four tones, oral communication in a wide sense would be next door to an impossibility. Even as things are, a sufficient number of words are pronounced alike to cause serious difficulty to the foreign student, and this difficulty has made itself felt to a certain extent in the province of surnames. For instance: supposing that, in accordance with Chinese custom, the usual formula 'What is your honourable name,' had been regularly answered only by the corresponding formula 'My humble name is Chang,' the questioner would still be left in doubt as to which of two Chang families might be intended by the reply. Mr. Chang would inevitably add, in the same breath, that his name was either 'bow-long' Chang or 'stand-up' Chang as the case might be, in allusion to the structure of the two written characters employed, one being composed of 'bow' and 'long,' and the other of 'stand-up' and 'early.' It would be as though an Englishman were to give Leigh as his name, and add the spelling, to avoid possible confusion with Lee, Lea, or Legh. There are not more, however, than about a dozen, or at most twenty, instances of the kind.

In China, the surname precedes whatever title its owner may happen to be possessed of. Ordinary individuals are addressed by a term, literally 'elder-born,' which corresponds more closely with Monsieur than with Mr., *e.g.*, Wang Elder-born; and also without the name, *e.g.*, 'Elder-born!' Officials may be similarly addressed as (*e.g.*) 'Lin Great man,' or simply 'Great man,' a term which is near about the equivalent of 'Your Honour.'

The double and triple surnames of the Chinese form a chapter by themselves, although out of the grand total of 176, only thirty double and no triple specimens have been admitted into *The Family Names*. Of the latter kind, I neither know nor can discover any particulars. I have never heard of a family with a triple surname, and it is very doubtful if any are still to be found. Of the thirty authorised double names, not more than four or five are derived from places, and about half-a-dozen more are commemorative of some high office held by an ancestor, or perhaps by the founder of the family. The *Hsien-yüans* or 'Hood-and-shafts,' claim their descent from the legendary Yellow Emperor, who lived B.C. 2697, and to whom the name *Hsien-yüan* was given as a sort of agnomen because he was said to be the inventor of carts and carriages. This is no doubt rubbish; but it is not so when the modern *Kung-suns* or 'Duke-grandsons' trace their origin to a grandson (*sun*) of one of the feudal dukes (*kung*), who may have lived between the eighth and fifth centuries before Christ. The *Kung-yang* or 'Duke-sheep' family may or may not have a foundation of truth in their story of a remote ancestor, also under the Chow dynasty, who was the grandson of a duke and was suckled by a sheep; but there need be no suspicion attaching to the origin of such a name as *Mu-ch'i*, which was bestowed upon the descendants of the elder brother of the Emperor Hsien Wên of the house of Toba (A.D. 466). A prince of the Turkic tribes is stated to have adopted as his surname the term *Mu-yung* or 'desire-influence,' because he said he desired

the virtues of Heaven, and wished to continue the good influences of the sun, moon, and stars. The explanation of *Ou-yang* or 'Ou-southern' is simple and straightforward. It was adopted by the descendants of an official appointed to a district on the southern side of the Ngou-yü hill. So *Shan-yü*, 'chieftain,' was not improbably, as is stated, the family name bestowed upon a chieftain of the Turkic tribes who yielded submission under the Han dynasty, some eighteen to twenty centuries ago. And even *Ssü-ma* 'manage-horse' may possibly have been adopted at an early date from a military title in use under the Chows; while with *Tung-fang* 'eastern-quarter,' said to have been adopted by the descendants of a legendary official, whose duty it was to control the influences of the eastern quarter, we become conscious at once of a transition beyond the boundary of unvarnished truth.

These, then, are the recognised surnames current upon the soil of China, one of which is the birthright of every Chinese subject, but may not on any account be changed or altered in form except under dispensation from the Emperor himself. Only the wretched creature who voluntarily, perhaps to avoid the penalty of crime, or involuntarily by the act of parents, takes upon himself or herself the vows of the Buddhist priesthood, is called upon to leave behind at the gate of the temple that last link with the outer world of sin. In its place is substituted a 'religious epithet,' under which the new initiate will be enrolled as monk or nun. It is therefore a terrible breach of etiquette, often however perpetrated by

unwary foreigners, to politely inquire of a Buddhist abbot what may be his honourable name. The dirty, sodden-faced old man will probably hesitate, look confused for a moment, and then, seeing that the mistake was unintentional, will quietly reply that his religious epithet is *Limpid Truth* or *Divine Emancipation*.

Surnames play an important part in the matrimonial system of China. A Chinese woman changes her name at marriage to that of her husband's family, to which she henceforth belongs. As with us, Miss Lee becomes Mrs. King; but the full legal title of a married woman always includes her maiden name, and a Miss Lee who should marry a Mr. King would be styled in all legal documents 'Mrs. King, *née* Lee.'

A Chinaman may not marry a woman of the same surname. If he does so, 'the parties and the contractor (*i.e.* go-between) of the marriage shall each receive sixty blows, and the marriage being null and void, the man and woman shall be separated, and the marriage presents forfeited to government.'—(*Penal Code*.) This is the general rule, based upon a belief in the original consanguinity through the male line of all persons bearing the same family name, and as such it is faithfully observed; although on the one hand, modifications of the law have become an absolute necessity in certain parts of China, and on the other, it is freely admitted by the Chinese that intermarriages between descendants of the same family through the male branch have not been absolutely prevented thereby. We will take the last case first. It is beyond a doubt that many families distinguished

now by different surnames belonged once upon a time to the same clan and possessed the same clan name, which was changed perhaps by a particular branch only for some local or other reason, several instances of which will be found recorded in the *Yüan-chien-lei-han* and similar works. Yet nothing is said against intermarriages between members of the new family and the original stock, because their surnames are different and the letter of the law is carried out. In rare cases, however, the feeling of consanguinity between families now of different surnames is kept fully alive. The *Yeh* family will never intermarry with the *Shên* family, because the name *Yeh* was merely adopted by a branch of the *Shên* family from the name of a place (formerly pronounced *Shê*) to which one of their ancestors was appointed magistrate. The *Liu's* and *Hou's* also refuse to allow intermarriages, a once prominent member of the *Liu* family having been forced by his own misconduct to flee from his native province and settle down in a distant part of the empire, where he described himself as 'Mr. Earl,' a name taken from his old title \* and said to have been up to that time unknown. So, again, the *Yang's* will not hear of intermarriage with the *Yih's*. In Chinese, the written character for *Yih* is part of the character *Yang*; and the *Yih* family is said to have descended from a certain slave in the *Yang* family, who was manumitted and allowed to adopt a portion of his master's name. It would be as if a manumitted slave of the house of Howard were allowed to adopt Ward as the surname of a new family.

\* *Hou*, which means 'earl.'

Modifications of the above rule have been introduced both with the sanction of the government and by the combined action of the people themselves. A classification was made of those who assisted and those who did not assist in the transport of grain to Peking during the reign of the Emperor Yung Loh (A.D. 1403-1425), and intermarriages of persons bearing the same surname, but not belonging to the same one of these two classes, were authorised to take place. In the same way, an understanding seems to have been arrived at by the inhabitants of large areas peopled almost entirely by a single clan, that intermarriages of the kind shall be permitted, provided always the contracting parties are not related within the five degrees of mourning;’ which means, that in the event of the death of either in an unmarried state, or married to somebody else, the survivor would be compelled to wear mourning of depth proportionate to the relationship, as prescribed by law.\*

The Chinese have their ‘four common names,’ corresponding to our Brown, Jones, and Robinson. These are *Chang*, *Wang*, *Li*, *Ch’ên*, and may be rendered by Draw-bow, Prince, Plum, and Spread, respectively. The first and third are used in a curious phrase—Chang-three-Li-four—much in the sense of our So-and-so, to indicate some person or persons unknown.

I will conclude with a few words about the personal names as opposed to the surnames of Chinese men and women. Within a few days of birth, the parents of the

\* See p. 171.

new-born baby usually fix upon some pet term of endearment, which is called the 'milk name,' and may be freely used during youth by any one speaking of or to the child. Among the poorer classes, this milk name is often retained through life; and a grown-up person will thus be addressed or alluded to by his friends and relatives under the sobriquet of his baby days. A girl, of no matter what station in life, never becomes possessed of any personal designation other than her milk name, which may be changed at marriage should the term employed be found to clash with any of the 'tabooed' names in the family which she is about to join. Specimens of the milk-names of boys would include such words as Doggy, Monkey, Booby, Fatty, etc.; those bestowed on girls are chosen with a view to their more lasting character, and run on a higher level, such as Fairy, Gold, Silver, Jade, Pearl, Agate, Azure, etc. A slave-girl is invariably named after some flower: Rose, Chrysanthemum, Peony, etc.; because, say the Chinese, flowers often change hands and fall to the highest bidders. A strange custom prevails with regard to the milk-names of delicate and unhealthy children. An offensive term is generally chosen for the child in question, the idea being that by this plan the evil influences which predominate in his or her constitution will in some way or other be counteracted, and the child's life saved. The masses, for whom the above theory is not of a sufficiently material character, believe that the Angel of Death will pass over any child thus named, not deeming it worth while to cut the thread of such an

ignoble being, on whom even its own parents have attached their stigma of scorn. A man, at this moment occupying the position of messenger in one of H.B.M.'s Consulates in China, was on this principle named Dung in his early youth; and by this sobriquet he is still known in the small but respectable circle in which he moves.\*

At seven or eight years of age, the Chinese boy, whose parents are sufficiently well-to-do in the world, either goes to school or shares the attention of a tutor with his brothers at home. In any case, it is about this period that he is provided with what we might call a prænomen, but for the fact that, like all subordinate designations and titles, it follows, instead of preceding, the family name; otherwise, it is a fair counterpart of the Roman prænomen, and of our baptismal or 'Christian' name. It is chosen in accordance with fixed rules, from which no one ever thinks of deviating. Some remote ancestor having selected a certain body of characters from any well-known source, these are used in rotation for the prænomena of his posterity, one for each generation, but variously combined in each individual instance. Thus, brothers will have a common character running through their prænomena,† but nothing in common with their father's, except that in the list upon which all the family prænomena are based, one character of the father's prænomen will always be found immediately preceding that one jointly occupied

\* *Rice* beneath a *corpse* is the actual character.

† See p. 191.



by the sons. It is difficult to illustrate this by such actual examples as 'Heaven's-gift' the father of 'Earth-born,' 'Earth-blessed,' etc., the English reader not being conversant with the Chinese source of the words Heaven and Earth; but an exact analogy would be formed if some father whose name might happen to be *Matthew* John Smith, were to introduce *Mark* into the names of all his sons, and they again *Luke* in the same way, and so on. When the list is exhausted, it is not repeated, but another is selected by the patriarchs of the family, and a new start is made. This, however, is of rare occurrence, especially when such a lengthy list as *The Thousand Character Essay* \* is chosen as the stock from which the names are to be derived. The prænomen is carefully entered against the name of the bearer in the family register, a genealogical record held in high esteem among the Chinese and regularly written up among all classes with any pretensions to social respectability. It is used on two special occasions:—(1) in arranging the preliminaries of a marriage, when the names of the man and woman, together with the year, month, day, and hour, of birth are exchanged, that it may be determined if their nativities are in proper correspondence; and (2) at the official registration of a boy in the books of the district magistrate with a view to his future identification.

As time wears on, and the boy, having already mastered the elements of learning, passes into the ranks

\* See p. 238.

of more advanced students, he usually adopts what, for want of a better equivalent, I shall call an agnomen. This consists of some ornamental phrase, often suggested by his tutor or friends, and frequently having reference in an indirect way to the personal tastes or characteristics of the owner. In social circles, a man's agnomen is used by his acquaintances in addressing him or in speaking about him to third persons; and he may have as many of such names as he pleases. 'Scholarship-complete,' 'Bright-hills,' and 'Correct-and-level,' are examples sufficient to illustrate the variety of combinations employed.

The Chinese have yet another kind of personal name, known as the 'official appellation.' This is assumed either at marriage or on entering to compete at the great public examinations, and is, strictly speaking, a mark of entry into official life, though widely adopted by persons in easy circumstances, much as the term *Esquire* among ourselves. It is this appellation which appears, following the surname, on the large red visiting-card in use among the Chinese; and by the surname and official appellation together, persons of all grades are spoken of in ordinary conversation. Thus, we speak freely of His Excellency, the Viceroy of Chihli, Grand Secretary of State, etc., etc., as Li Hung-chang: *Li* 'Plum' being his surname, and *Hung-chang* 'Literary polish' (or words to that effect) being his official appellation. But we speak to him by the high title he has won for himself in the service of his Imperial master.

I began this paper with a story of the pardonable ignorance of an English lady in the matter of the

surnames and personal names of the Chinese. I will end it with another, in which Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and the high authorities at the Colonial Office, are more or less involved.

Many years ago, a needy Chinaman emigrated from Whampoa, near Canton, to the Straits' Settlements, where he raised himself by thrift and force of character to wealth and position, including, as far as I recollect, the appointment of first Chinese Consul at Singapore. His name was Hu Yü-ki, the last syllable of which would be pronounced *kai* or *kay* in his native dialect; but he was familiarly known in his struggling days under the nickname of 'Whampoa' from the place of his birth, and even as he advanced in life this name stuck to him to the displacement of his own. And so, resigning himself to the inevitable, he took the *kai* or *kay*, by which he would be addressed in conjunction with the prefix *A* or *Ah*—A-kay or Ah-kay—and placing these as initials before what had practically become his family name, he described himself according to English custom as the Hon. A. K. Whampoa.\* And it was positively under this ludicrous sobriquet that Her Majesty the Queen was recommended to confer, and did confer, upon an enterprising and worthy Chinaman a companionship in the exalted Order of St. Michael and St. George.

\* Sometimes with the initial of his Chinese surname as well; thus, 'Hon<sup>ble</sup>. H. A. K. Whampoa.' This was probably the authorised form, but the other was more commonly seen in newspapers, etc.

## FREEMASONRY IN CHINA.\*

IN the year 1870, while attending the meetings of my mother lodge, 'The Oak, No. 190,' I was frequently met with the question 'Have you Freemasonry in China?'—meaning, of course, as a purely Chinese institution; and again, many times since it has been my good fortune to be a member of the 'Ionic Lodge of Amoy, No. 1781,' the same query has been advanced in conversation by several brethren desirous of some information as to the possible existence of any connecting link between Freemasonry and the Far East. I have therefore concluded that a brief outline of what I myself have been able to gather on this subject, during a residence of over thirteen years in the country, may not be wholly devoid of interest.

The first issue that presents itself for settlement is simply one of terms. What do we mean when we ask if *Freemasonry* exists in China? Do we confine ourselves to the comparatively modern system in vogue at the present day among western nations, with its ritual of doubtful date, its signs, its passwords, and its Book

\* An address to the members of the Ionic Lodge of Amoy, delivered June 8th, 1880.

of Constitutions? If so, then I would affirm that our noble fraternity does not exist now among the Chinese, and has never existed in China at all. Or are we inquiring about mere secret societies, of which China has always had enough and to spare, and of which at least one, as I shall take occasion to show later on, bears in some respects a rather singular resemblance to our Craft? Or lastly, does this question point to that higher and more ethereal scheme of morality, veiled in an allegory and illustrated by symbols drawn from operative masonry, which was initiated in pre-historic times when the human race, emerging gradually from savagery and barbarism, first turned to contemplate the wondrous works of the Great Architect of the Universe and began to recognise the mutual obligations subsisting between man and man? For this is the masonry that every enlightened mason should seek to cultivate—the masonry, not of forms and of ceremonies, but of the heart. We learn from operative masonry that the straight is more graceful and more enduring than the crooked, the upright a better weight-supporter than that which is awry, and that the rectangle and the circle are more practically useful and beautiful than other and irregular shapes. In speculative masonry, we apply all these facts figuratively to our morals, and to ascertain how far the Chinese have gone in the same direction will be the main object of this paper.

From time immemorial we find the square and compasses used by Chinese writers, either together or

separately, to symbolise precisely the same phases of moral conduct as in our own system of Freemasonry. I may note here, in parentheses, that the Chinese invert the order of the words and say 'compasses and square.' Other masonic tools and appliances have also been similarly employed, as I shall now endeavour to show. The earliest passage known to me which bears upon the subject is to be found in the *Book of History*. There, in an account of a military expedition,\* we read—

Ye officers of government, apply the compasses !

and in another part of the same venerable record a magistrate is spoken of as 'the man of the level' or 'the level man.' † Now the *Book of History* embraces a period reaching from the twenty-fourth to the seventh century before Christ ; so that even if we begin where the *Book of History* ends, we find curious masonic expressions to have been in use, at any rate in the written language, more than seven hundred years before the Christian era—that is to say, only about a couple of hundred years after the death of King Solomon himself. But inasmuch as there are no grounds whatever for impugning the authentic character of that work as connected with periods much more remote, this would give to speculative masonry a far higher antiquity than has ever yet been claimed.

The published *Discourses* of Confucius provide us

\* See the *Yin-chêng*.

† See the *Li-chêng*.

with several masonic allusions of a more or less definite character. For instance, when recounting his own degrees of moral progress in life, the Master tells us that only at seventy years of age could he venture to follow the inclinations of his heart without fear of 'transgressing the limits of the square.'\* This would be B.C. 481. But it is in the works of his great follower Mencius, who flourished nearly two hundred years later, that we meet with a fuller and more expressive masonic phraseology. In one chapter we are taught that just as the most highly skilled artificers are unable, without the aid of the square and compasses, to produce perfect rectangles or perfect circles, so must all men apply these tools figuratively to their lives, and the level and the marking-line besides, if they would walk in the straight and even paths of wisdom, and keep themselves within the bounds of honour and virtue.† But I will give you the very words of three of the most curious passages:—

In Book IV. we read—

The compasses and the square are the embodiment of the rectangular and of the round, just as the prophets of old were the embodiment of the due relationships between man and man.

In Book VI. we find these words—

A master mason, in teaching his apprentices, makes use of the compasses and the square. Ye who are engaged in the pursuit of wisdom must also make use of the compasses and square.

\* See the *Wei-chêng*.

† See the *Li-shu*.

Finally, in Book VII. we have—

A carpenter or a carriage-builder may give a man the compasses and the square, but he cannot necessarily make him a skilful workman.

These extracts are perhaps sufficiently curious to make further comment unnecessary. It must not, however, be assumed that such allusions are confined to the sayings of Confucius and Mencius; I have simply chosen these two as the most widely known names in the range of Chinese literature. In confirmation of which I will now place before you a few passages from other sources, illustrative of the extended employment among Chinese authors of masonic phraseology in a purely figurative sense. But I must just detain you for a moment over a quotation from a famous canonical work, commonly known to foreigners as the *Great Learning*, the actual authorship of which is a moot point among scholars, though it is admitted on all sides that the text dates from between three and five hundred years before Christ. There, in Chapter X., we read that a man should abstain from doing unto others what he would not they should do unto him; ‘and this,’ adds the writer, ‘is called the principal of acting on the square.’

To continue. In a celebrated poem\* which dates from the fourth century B.C., the writer alludes thus metaphorically to the degeneracy of his times:—

Of a truth the workmanship of the age is specious!  
Neglected lie the square and compasses, our true guides;  
The measuring-line is discarded and the crooked is pursued,  
A showy elegance is the standard now aimed at by all.

\* The *Li Sao* or *Dissipation of Grief*. See p. 17



The same poem contains several similar allusions, such as—

In the relation of sovereign and subject,  
Seek the harmony of the square and the measuring-line.

The Taoist philosopher Chuang-tzŭ, who flourished about B.C. 330, and who propounded many extraordinary doctrines—among others, that crime is due simply to the measures taken for its repression, and that immorality is an invention of moralists,\*—has several allusions to the square and compasses, one of which is quite in keeping with the paradoxical tenor of his writings:—

Destroy all distinctions between the curved and the straight; discard the compasses and the square; snap off the fingers of the artificer Shui;† and then, then for the first time, will the world see what real workmanship is like.

And so I could go on producing a large number of similar quotations from various Chinese authors of note, such as the philosopher Wên-tzŭ of the fourth century B.C., the poet Liu Tsung-yŭan of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 773–819), the famous scholar and poet Su Tung-p'o of the Sung dynasty (A.D. 1036–1101), but I will now ask you to descend with me to more modern times, that I may show how this same masonic phraseology has preserved its place in the literary language of China even to the present day. In the well-known *Sacred Edict*, which consists of a number of moral maxims addressed to the

\* See p. 16.

† A noted workman of antiquity, who could draw perfect squares and circles with his fingers alone.

people by the second Emperor of the reigning dynasty (1661-1723) and expanded by the third Emperor, his son, we are told that filial piety and fraternal love should be the chief objects in the moral education of our children. We are bidden to exemplify these virtues in our own lives, and to otherwise inculcate them by every means in our power, and thus, as the text has it—

The wisdom of our sons may ripen day by day, and they may walk within the limits prescribed by the compasses and the square.

In three other passages of the same work the word 'compasses' is used in a metaphorical sense, but what I have already given is doubtless sufficient for the purpose of this investigation. It may not, however, be out of place to add that the proverbial philosophy of China teems with allusions of the kind, so much so, that when the Amoy Masonic Hall was built there was no difficulty in finding at once suitable mottoes to place on each side of the entrance door to the Lodge. That on the right signifies—

The holy doctrine,\* in its education of mankind, makes use of the compasses and the square:

That on the left—

The genius of the sage in the administration of affairs takes the form of the rectangular or the round.

Neither are these figurative expressions confined absolutely to the written language, but prevail to a greater or less extent in all the colloquial dialects at the

\* Confucianism.

present date. In the everyday parlance of the Chinese, a man who has no 'square and compasses,' or who does not understand the 'square and compasses,' is one who is oblivious of all moral and social obligations, and totally unfit for any society of men 'who prize honour and virtue above the external advantages of rank and fortune.' By the same token, the Chinese regard their only coin, the familiar *cash* (Fig. 1), which is circular, and pierced with a square hole, as the most perfect symbol of a perfect man.\* But I must now pass on to inquire whence arose this marvellous adoration of these two shapes, the material embodiment of which is to be found, as Mencius has already told us, in the square and compasses. Certain Chinese philosophers of an imaginative order would have us believe that the circle was discovered by observation of the beam of a balance revolving upon its point of support, adding that the square followed as a necessary consequence of the circle. The actual words of one writer are—



Fig. 1.

The balance revolving gave birth to the circle; what the circle involves is a square.†

Here we have the incongruous picture of a people already acquainted with the functions of a balance, but ignorant

\* The specimen given here belongs to the reign of Shun Chih, the first Emperor of the present or Manchu dynasty (A.D. 1644-1662). *Cash* were first coined in China about 200 B.C., previous to which the shell of the pearl-oyster was the recognised circulating medium.

† See the *Ch'ien-han-lü-li-chih*.

of the very existence of the simplest and most beautiful of all shapes! I trust I have a better theory to propound than that, by which this singular position of the square and compasses in the earliest literature of China may perhaps be accounted for in a more satisfactory manner.

The first objects of religious veneration among the ancient Chinese were undoubtedly Heaven and Earth; they are the two greatest of the three great Powers of Nature, and the progenitors of the third, which is Man. And when the half-savage nomad tribes which wandered over the untilled plains of what is now the Middle Kingdom, saw above them, and around them, the over-arching canopy of the sky, they concluded, like the Egyptians, that Heaven was round; mother Earth they believed to be square, for what reason I am unable to say, unless it be that a square is that shape, not a circle, which suggests itself as most conveniently to be contained within a circle. At any rate, it has ever been accepted as a physical axiom in China that 'Heaven is round, Earth is square;'<sup>\*</sup> and among the relics of the nature-worship of old, we find the altar of Heaven at Peking *round*, while the altar of Earth is *square*.<sup>†</sup> By the marriage of Heaven and Earth, the conjunction of the circle and the square, the Chinese believe that all things were produced and subsequently distributed,

<sup>\*</sup> The authorities for this statement are innumerable. Wên-tzŭ, of the fourth century B.C., said 'Earth is square but without any limit, so that no one can see its portals;' and Hwai Nan Tzŭ wrote, 'The goddess Nü Kua bears on her back the square earth, embracing with her arms the circle of the sky.'

<sup>†</sup> See the *Digest of the Institutes of the Ch'ing Dynasty*, sect. 37.

each according to its proper function. And such is, in my opinion, the undoubted origin of the term 'square and compasses' as figuratively applied to human conduct by the earliest ancestors of the Chinese people. I am unable to believe that they derived this particular masonic phraseology from any admiration or reverence for the masonic art, unless as connected with what I have shown they believed to be the architecture of the visible universe. At the same time, I am quite prepared to admit that as ages passed away the real secret of these words became obscured, and that the figurative employment of the term 'square and compasses,' to which had been added that of other implements and phrases in use among operative builders, was henceforth traced no further back than to the beginnings of masonry itself. There is, on the other hand, every reason why this phrase 'square and compasses' should have originated with the nature-worship of a round Heaven and a square Earth. To begin with, the words themselves, long before they came to be used as names for the instruments by which squares and circles are produced, stood simply for 'circle' and 'square;' and secondly, Heaven and Earth have always been regarded as prototypes of perfection and as unerring models for human imitation. They are the father and mother of the princes of China. They have no partialities:—

Heaven covers no one in particular: Earth supports no one in particular: the sun, moon, and stars shine down on no one in particular.\*

\* From the *Book of Rites*.

And a great portion of one of the *Four Books*\* is devoted to eulogising the systematic uniformity of the operations of these two Powers, and to pointing out that he who can exhibit in his own life a similar uniformity of principle may be considered as their co-equal, and take his place accordingly in Nature's great triad of Heaven, Earth, and Man. Further, this hypothesis better explains the colloquial phrase; a man who has no 'square and compasses' being one utterly regardless of Heaven and Earth, the primeval parents of mankind, whose useful unvarying existence is the standard of rectitude for all.

I would now ask your attention to a celebrated passage which occurs in one of our old masonic lectures:—

In all well-formed and regularly constituted Masonic Lodges there is a certain point within a circle round which the brethren cannot materially err.

This it is of which Dr. Oliver, in his work on *Signs and Symbols* (p. 197), speaks of as 'that most important emblem of masonry.'† Now the Chinese have this very symbol (Fig. 2), a dot within a circle, which is nothing more nor less than the ancient form of the character

\* The *Chung Yung*, or 'Doctrine of the Mean,' the authorship of which is ascribed to Tzū Ssü, the grandson of Confucius.

† The learned Doctor proceeds, on p. 205, to deal with a Chinese symbol, which he says bears 'a great resemblance to that which is the subject of this lecture,' and which he describes as a 'circle bounded north and south by two serpents, emblematical of the universe protected and supported equally by the Power and Wisdom of the Creator.' But here Dr. Oliver, himself not a Chinese scholar, was simply accepting a figment totally unsupported by fact.

for *sun*.\* It is one of the best of the scanty number of *bonâ fide* hieroglyphics that the Chinese have to show; it is a positive picture of the sun, the life-giver, as their forefathers saw it overhead, a dot within the circle of the sky. The masonic 'point within a circle' is held to represent the one Supreme Power, whatever that Power may be, the Great Architect of the Universe, recognised alike by ourselves and our brother masons of every religious denomination; and it is, to say the least of it, curious that the same emblem should be found among the Chinese, and signifying, if not Heaven itself, still the most prominent object in the sky.†



Fig. 2.

There are many other coincidences of the kind to be traced in the ancient and modern lives of the Chinese people, which the calm inquirer cannot be too cautious in accepting off-hand as proofs of Freemasonry in China. For instance, Wor. Bro. Alabaster recently called attention to a number of coincidences he himself had met with between the old religion of China and the ritual and observances of our Craft. He noticed that the Chinese character *pên* (Fig. 3), meaning 'root' or

\* The modern form of this character is 日, a shape into which it had almost been modified in the *Shuo Wen* dictionary, which dates from the first century of our era. Its older form is, however, traceable in several of the composite characters, in which it there appears as a factor.

† In this connection it is curious to note that Druid temples were circular, often with a stone at the centre.

'origin,' bore some resemblance to the masonic skirrit, forgetting that the form of this character, as we see it now, was only introduced some four hundred years after Christ, when the period of the old religion of China, with which Bro. Alabaster was dealing, had long since passed away. Under



Fig. 3.

its earlier shape (Fig. 4), no possible resemblance could fairly be traced either to the skirrit or to any other masonic tool. So also, Bro. Alabaster alleges that the Emperors of China of four thousand years ago wore a jewel identical with our *square*, and transmitted at death by every occupant of the throne to his successor as a badge of Imperial sway. This would indeed be a discovery, if sup-



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

ported by proper evidence; unfortunately, however, there is the fact that the 'jewel' in question, which was simply a kind of musical stone, opens at an obtuse angle, and would consequently be quite out of place, operatively as a masonic tool, and speculatively as a masonic emblem (Fig. 5).\* The old Chinese character for a square

\* Bro. Alabaster drew his information from the works of the Jesuit fathers, in which this (Fig. 6) musical stone is wrongly depicted as in the accompanying diagram.

Since my return from China, I have been to the Supreme Council, 33°, and have seen the famous jade figure



Fig. 6.



is written thus (Fig. 7), the angles being of course intended for right angles.\* We must not jump to hasty conclusions on the strength of a few isolated examples; but what we should do is to collect as many such coincidences as possible, and then to attempt to estimate them at their true value. The Chinese language contains many characters apparently masonic in form, but almost all these coincidences vanish for the most part into thin air when we recollect that the written



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.

symbols of China are no longer what they were. Characters are now written with straight lines; whereas before the Christian era almost every other stroke was a curve. Thus, the character *chêng* (Fig. 8), 'upright,' is now undoubtedly

masonic in shape as well as in meaning, bearing as it does a singular resemblance to the triple *tau* monogram of the Royal Arch degree; in ancient days, however, it was formed

of Confucius, taken from the loot of the Summer Palace, in which figure the sage is popularly supposed to be wearing the masonic square. The annexed diagram, from a rubbing obtained at that visit, will show, however, that the ornament worn by Confucius does not open at the angle required.



\* Older forms are given by Chinese lexicographers, but the above is the earliest in which much confidence can be placed.

with curved strokes (Fig. 9), in which its identity with the masonic monogram can be traced only by the enthusiast. On the other hand, we have the character *t'ou* (Fig. 10), the symbol on our master mason's apron, written now as it was between two and three thousand years ago; and this is by no means the only instance of the kind.

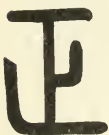


Fig. 9.

It may also be considered curious by some that the old Chinese character *chi* (Fig. 11), should signify a meeting or concourse of people, since we read in Dr. Oliver's *Treasury* that 'Freemasonry is a Triad Society,' and that 'every triad is a landmark;' and those who are gifted with a lively power of imagination may possibly be able to identify the character *ho* (Fig. 12), with our own past master's jewel. It is at any rate rather remarkable that this last character should have



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

been employed to denote the union of Heaven and Earth, that is, of the square and the circle of which I spoke just now; and that it should also form part of the name and an important emblem of the great Chinese *Triad Society*, on which I shall shortly have a few words to say. There still remain, however, several points in connection with ancient times to which I should like to draw your attention before passing on to the more modern secret association.

The place of honour, occupied by the head of every Chinese family, is in the east. Hence, an employer is commonly spoken of by his employés as 'the eastern one.' On the other hand, the Emperors of China and all mandarins have their throne and judgment-seats facing the south; that is, they sit in the north.



Fig. 12.

It is difficult, therefore, to detect anything more than a coincidence in the position accorded to the master of a Chinese household.

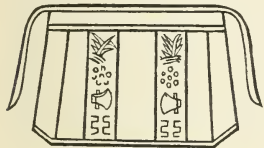


Fig. 13.

Let us now take the apron, that distinguishing badge of a Freemason.

Masonically speaking, it is considered as dividing the body into two halves, the upper and nobler half containing the brain and the heart, which are thus separated from the merely corporeal and baser half below. Now the Chinese have for centuries recognised this division of the body,\* and in their ancient ceremonial of several thousand years ago an apron of some kind undoubtedly played a part. Such an article of dress is in fact mentioned in the *Discourses* of



Fig. 14.

\* See the *Hsi-yüan-lu*.

Confucius, and is depicted in the old illustrated dictionary of the classics as ornamented with a plant, seven stars, an axe, and the character *a* or *ya* (Fig. 13). The plant or shrub will of course commend itself to the



Fig. 15.

notice of every master mason, while I may add that the Chinese symbol for an axe (Fig. 14), placed inside the symbol for square, thus (Fig. 15), is the identical character by which the term 'master mason' is expressed in the written language of China.\* What the character *ya* (Fig. 16) signifies in this combination, I am not prepared to say. Some assert that its meaning has reference to the disappearance of the sun; and if so, why not to the darkness visible of a master mason's Lodge? As to the apron, the Great Yü,



Fig. 16.

who is said to have drained off the waters of the Chinese deluge, girt himself with a lambskin apron when, bareheaded and barefooted, he offered himself as a sacrifice for the people; besides which we have the apron distinctly mentioned in the *Book of History* as part of the sacrificial costume of old.

In the memoirs of the Jesuit fathers there is an engraving† of the famous Spring Festival, from which it would appear that a boy was made to follow in the

\* On the symbolism of the axe, see HIGGINS' *Anacalypsis*.

† First pointed out to me by Wor. Bro. Alabaster.

procession with one leg clothed and the other bare, emblematical of Heaven and Earth, the two great creative powers in Nature; and quite recently I came across a passage in a native author having reference to certain wands nine feet long and surmounted by *doves*, which were formerly bestowed as marks of distinction on the deserving. The Chinese have, too, their Great Architect of the Universe, if indeed such a term can be held applicable to the gross and grotesque conception of a First Being. He is known as *P'an-ku*, and was evolved, countless ages before the existence of anything, out of chaos. It was only with his death that the work of creation begun. His own dissolution gave birth to the universe as we see it around us. His breath became the wind; his voice, the thunder; his left eye, the sun; his right eye, the moon; his blood flowed into rivers; his hair grew into trees and plants; his flesh became the soil; his sweat descended as rain; while the parasites that infested his body are believed to have been the origin of the human species.

I will now conclude with a few remarks upon the secret societies of China. These exist at the present day, though strictly forbidden by the Government as hot-beds of sedition and political intrigue. The best known of them is the Triad Society, which has its headquarters in the Straits' Settlements, no longer daring to show itself as an institution within the limits of the Middle Kingdom, though not a few of its members are to be found at and about Amoy. It took its rise some hundred and fifty years ago, curiously enough near about

the period of the great masonic revival in the West. The term 'Triad' here alludes to a conjunction of the three great powers in nature—Heaven, Earth, and Man; hence it is sometimes called the Heaven and Earth Society. Less than thirty years ago, the brotherhood actually went so far as to issue a private coin. It resembled in every way the ordinary Chinese *cash*, except that it bore on the reverse the character *ho* (Fig. 12) 'united,' which I mentioned just now as bearing a distant resemblance to our past master's jewel, and also the point within a circle (Fig. 2), from which no master mason can err. This society admits members with ceremonies very similar to our own. Their working-tools comprise a 12-inch gauge, called 'the jade foot-rule,' a balance, a steel-yard, an abacus or counting-board, and a pencil. They have a W. M.; a 'great brother' and a 'second brother,' corresponding to our S. W. and J. W.; a 'first point' and a 'second point,' corresponding to our S. D. and J. D.; and an inner and outer guard, both of whom wear wave-shaped swords, supposed to resemble a dragon swimming in a pool. They have a Treasurer, and recognise the three degrees of E. A., F. C., and M. M., which they speak of as 'affiliated younger brother,' 'obligated elder brother,' and 'obligated uncle,' respectively. They have their Book of Constitutions, and issue certificates, besides giving to each member a badge in the form of a medal which he can conveniently carry about with him wherever he goes. Circulars are also sent round convening the lodge meeting and stating the time and place. At the

initiation of a candidate, he is first purified by ablution, his upper garments are removed, and he is clothed in white. His shoes and stockings are pulled off and straw sandals put upon his feet, 'because,' say the brethren, 'no one takes note of the poor and penniless.' An alarm is then given at the door of the Lodge, and after a number of questions have been properly answered by the outer guard, an invocation is pronounced, when, amidst burning of incense and sacrifices of meat and wine, the candidate is admitted and led up to the altar to repeat, kneeling, his great and solemn obligation. This occupies some time, consisting as it does of no less than thirty-six articles of considerable length. Before commencing, the head is struck off a white cock, and the candidate drinks some of its blood mingled with wine. The death of the cock is symbolical of the death of the new member to the outside world, previous to his re-birth as a just and upright man and a brother. This particular bird is chosen because of its vigilance, which curiously enough is the very explanation given in Ashe's *Masonic Manual* (p. 65) of the cock as a masonic emblem; and its colour is, in China as elsewhere, emblematical of purity of heart. At the same time, a stick of burning incense is arranged near the candidate, and when the obligation is over he plunges it into the ground, praying himself to be extinguished like that fire should he ever break his obligation or divulge any of the secrets entrusted to his care. After the obligation there follows a long ceremonial. The candidate is catechised by the Master, and prompted

in the answers he has to make. He is asked, 'How high is the Lodge?' He replies, 'As high as one's eyes can reach,' by which he means that it is bounded only by the unfathomable azure of the sky. He is required to state its breadth. He replies, 'As broad as the two capitals and thirteen provinces,' alluding to the broad empire of the Middle Kingdom. China proper contains eighteen provinces now, but under the Ming dynasty there were only thirteen;\* and the political significance of this society is generally believed to be the overthrow of the present and the restoration of the last dynasty. And by another singular coincidence, the word *Ming* means 'light;' hence the restoration of the Ming dynasty would signify a return to the Reign of Light.

The candidate now goes on to perform the eight salutations—viz. : (1) to Heaven, (2) Earth, (3) the Sun, (4) the Moon, (5) the Five Founders of the society, (6) to Wan Yün-lung, a former Grand Master, (7) to the brethren generally, absent and present, and (8) lastly, to the glorious reputation of the Order. More ceremonies follow in quick succession, and it is only after a *séance* of some four or five hours that the initiation is fully completed. I think, however, enough has been said on this part of the subject.

Regularly initiated brethren discover themselves to one another by asking, 'Whence do you come?' The

\* The 'two capitals' are Peking and Nanking. It was from the latter to the former that the residence of the Court was transferred by Yung Loh, the third Emperor of the Ming dynasty, who reigned 1403-1425.



answer is, 'I come from the East.' The next question is, 'Whither are you directing your steps?' to which the only authorised reply is, 'I wish to go where I can join the myriad brethren.' If a brother attempts to gain admission to a Lodge without his certificate, the outer guard says to him, 'I will kill you!' The brother then replies, 'My throat is hard; I fear not;' whereupon, if there is no further cause for suspicion, he is admitted at once. Members of the Society desiring recognition are warned always to step into a brother's house left



Fig. 17.

foot first, and to make certain signs by the arrangement of tea-cups or chop-sticks in a given way. Or they may tuck up the right leg of their trowsers, or sit with their toes turned in at a right angle—with their feet in fact in the form of a square. A pair of shoes placed in this position is also a proof of the recent presence of a true and lawful brother. Standing with the legs wide apart, in the form of the Chinese character *pa* 'eight' (Fig. 17), is likewise a recognised sign of the fraternity: it alludes to the performance of the eight salutations by the candidate for admission to the society.\*

And now, brethren, I feel that I have already put your patience and consideration to a sufficiently severe

\* For further information on this part of the subject see the *Thian Ti Hwui* by G. SCHLEGEL, and some papers on *Chinese Secret Societies*, by W. A. PICKERING, recently published in the journal of the Straits' branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

test. It is unreasonable to expect you to take the same interest in Chinese topics as I myself, who have made the study of this people my life's hobby; but I do hope that the question as to any masonic connection between China and the West has been put before you in such a light as to enable you in future to answer it for yourselves.

THE END

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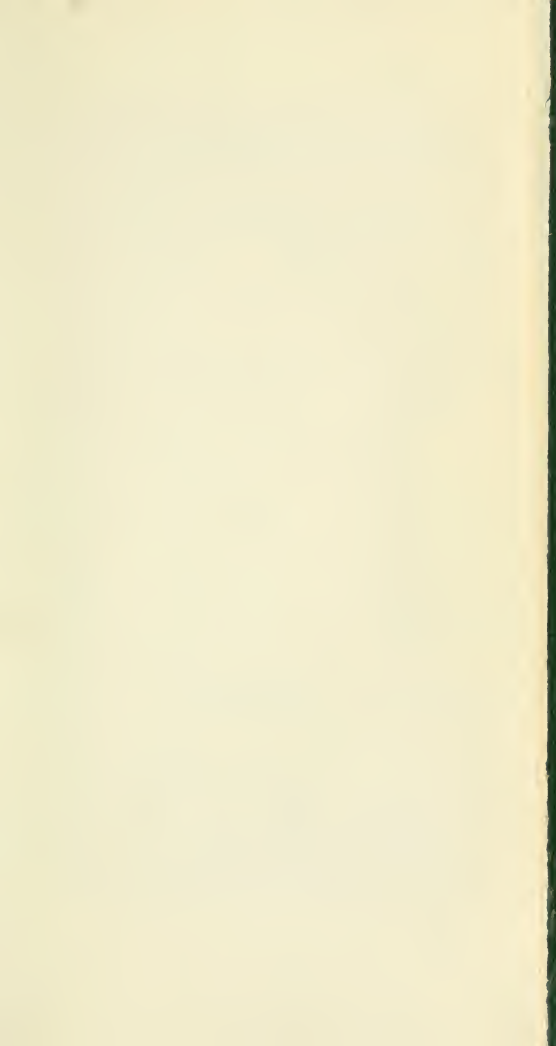
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